HKUST and HKSI Join Forces to Enhance Dual Career Pathways for Elite Athletes

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The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to facilitate dual career pathways in sports and academics for elite athletes in Hong Kong.

Under this MoU, HKSI can nominate full-time elite athletes for admission to undergraduate programs of HKUST. The University will offer flexible academic accommodations, including study load balancing, re-scheduling in examinations and adjustment in class attendance requirement, on a case-by-case basis. An advisory committee comprising faculty members and sports specialists will be formed to oversee the athletes’ learning progress and address their individual needs. To accommodate their intensive trainings and competition schedules, HKUST may extend their study to a maximum of twice the normative program duration.

The nominated athletes can also benefit from the Student Athletes Admission Scheme (SAAS), a new admission scheme recently launched by HKUST to recruit and support student athletes in pursuing their sporting dreams while obtaining a quality education at HKUST. On top of the above-mentioned flexible academic arrangement, successful applicants may receive tuition scholarships and living allowances of up to HK$42,100 and HK$55,000 per year respectively. In addition, HKUST also offers sponsorship for sports competitions, sports injury prevention and treatment trainings as well as sports counselling services for student athletes.

The MoU was signed by HKUST Acting Provost Prof. PONG Ting-Chuen and HKSI Chief Executive Dr. Trisha LEAHY. Witnesses were Prof. Sabrina LIN, HKUST Vice-President for Institutional Advancement; Prof. King CHOW, HKUST Acting Dean of Students and Mr. Ron LEE, HKSI Director of Community Relations and Marketing.

Dr. Trisha Leathy said, “HKSI attaches great importance to the provision of comprehensive support in promoting the holistic development and sustainable growth of young athletes. The MOU provides athletes with flexible access to tertiary education. It solidifies the concept of dual career pathway and empowers elite athletes pursuing their sporting dreams while continuing university studies. Thanks to the HKUST for sharing the same vision on whole-person development with the HKSI and I look forward to an even more integrated collaboration with HKUST in the future.”

Prof. Pong Ting-Chuen said, “The collaboration between the two parties will not only facilitate young athletes in their dual career development in sports and studies, but will also foster sporting culture and diversity in the university community. HKUST has been giving out scholarships, support and recognition to our student athletes for many years. We wish this collaboration could strengthen our support for young athletes in Hong Kong.”

Prof. King Chow added, “Working closely together, both HKUST and HKSI would endeavor to help elite athletes balance their education and training needs in the best possible way.”

After the signing ceremony, Hong Kong athletes Edith LEE, Rachel WONG and James YUEN shared their study experience at HKUST and the kind of help an athlete desires. Edith Lee, an archery athlete and a Year three student majoring in Computer Science and Engineering, is now taking leave from study. She said the gap year arrangement gave her space and confidence in pursuing her sporting dream. She is also thankful for the competition sponsorships offered by the University, which helps relieve her financial burden.

Rachel Wong, a gymnast and Year four student majoring in Biological Science, said the admission arrangement and chance for conditional offer could help high school athletes in lifting part of their pressure from preparing for public examinations, hence, they are able to concentrate more on sports trainings and competitions. Meanwhile, James Yuen, a HKSI Scholarship Athlete in Wushu and a Year one student in the School of Business and Management, said that academic accommodation such as adjustments on the credit loading for each semester is essential as it allows athletes to have more time in preparing for competitions and related selections.

The SAAS is now open for application. For more details, please visit: https://join.ust.hk/saas/.

About The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) (www.ust.hk) is a world-class research university that focuses on science, technology and business as well as humanities and social science. HKUST offers an international campus, and a holistic and interdisciplinary pedagogy to nurture well-rounded graduates with global vision, a strong entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking. HKUST attained the highest proportion of internationally excellent research work in the Research Assessment Exercise 2014 of Hong Kong’s University Grants Committee, and is ranked as the world’s best young university in Times Higher Education’s Young University Rankings 2018. Its graduates were ranked 16th worldwide and top in Greater China in Global University Employability Survey 2018.
About Hong Kong Sports Institute

Guided by the HKSAR Government’s current policy direction, and using its professional expertise in elite sport, the Hong Kong Sports Institute’s (HKSI) vision is to become the region’s elite training systems delivery leader by providing state-of-the-art, evidence-based, elite sports training and athlete support systems resulting in sustainable world-class sports results. As the Government’s designated organisation to provide the high performance training system for eligible sports, the HKSI is committed to working in partnership with the Government, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and the National Sports Associations to provide an environment in which sports talent can be identified, nurtured, and developed to pursue excellence in the international sporting arena.

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