

Title: Higher Education Experiences of Elite Student-Para-Athletes in the UK

Authors: Campbell, N.

Year: 2013

Keywords: student-athlete, United Kingdom, para-athletes, para-student-athletes, transition, university

Sport(s): Para-sports (mixed)

Journal: Journal of Further and Higher Education

Main theme: Identity

Secondary themes: Transition

Aim: The study aimed to address a gap in knowledge by exploring the experiences of six student-para-athletes. To date, it is the first UK study to have explored explicitly the transition of high performance athletes with disabilities into higher education.

Method: Participants were part of a Paralympic sport performance pathway and represented Great Britain in a number of para sports, and data was collected via interviews.

Results and Practical Implications: Results explore little about the demands of being a para-student-athlete at university, but more about the meaning around this, their identity, and how more research on this neglected area is needed. The results suggest that all the participants share the identity of an 'athlete', however the identities of being a 'student' and 'disabled' did not show a sense of solidarity, suggesting these are more likely to be formed through social construction. The identity of being 'disabled' demonstrated a wide difference between participants, suggesting how individual it is for each person. The only shared aspect of the 'disabled' identity was their sporting career. The author suggest that higher education institutes should ensure that the needs and wants of disability students are included across the spectrum of university life. They also suggest that universities need to invest further in understanding the unique needs of student-para-athletes and to



LOTTERY FUNDED

consider fully to what extent they consider the combination of their disability and their athletic ambition may diversify their overall student experience.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1311997?needAccess=true>