

Title: The Development and Initial Validation of the Dual Career Competency Questionnaire for Support Providers (DCCQ-SP)

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Aims: The present study was part of the Gold in Education and Elite Sport (GEES) project and aimed to understand the main roles of a dual career support provider. The study recognised that following previous research that developed a questionnaire that can assess the importance and possession of athlete's dual career competencies, there is a need for a measure to explore specific competencies of those who are supporting dual career athletes. The aim of the study was to describe the development process of the measure, followed by a validation of the instrument.

Method: Dual Career Support Provider was defined as "a professional consultant, related to an educational institute and/or an elite sport organisation – or certified by one of those – that provides support to elite athletes in view of optimizing their dual career". The study looked to previous research in the development of the dual career support provider competencies. This previous research has suggested that to optimise elite athletes' development, support providers must guide athletes through specific transitions, barriers, and challenges within differing development areas (e.g., academic, psychological). The dual career support provider does not work in isolation and must interact with the athletes'

network (e.g., coaches, parents, teachers), therefore a key role for the support provide is to manage relationships and construct an effective environment for the athlete. The support provider must also help to support the athlete from a structural point of view, for example, helping them to move exam dates. The support provider also is responsible for building a strong relationship with their athlete, be aware of their holistic development, and help them to build autonomy by developing the athletes' personal competencies.

Results and Practical Implications: Based on this research, the authors formulated different dimensions of what they perceived to be competent dual career support provision and defined what these dimensions covered. Following an external review of these items, the Dual Career Competency Questionnaire for Support Providers (DCCQ-SP) was developed and included 6 competency factors. These were; (1) advocacy and cooperation competencies, (2) reflection and self-management competencies, (3), organisational competencies, (4) awareness of student-athletes' environment, (5), empowerment competencies, and (6) relationship competencies. The study supports the claim of previous policy documents that suggest that development and education for dual career support providers should be further established and formalised within a European setting. 83% of the participants had never followed an educational programme within dual careers, highlighting their lack of availability. This research can be used as a basis for the development and adaptation of current qualifications within this area. The DCCQ-SP could also be used in daily practice and help to guide dual career support providers in the development and evaluation of their practice.

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