

Title: Ten Essential Features of European Dual Career Development Environments: A Multiple Case Study

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Aims: The aim of this study was to understand the important features of dual career development environments (DCDEs). DCDEs include any environment that supports athletes' effort in combining their competitive sporting careers with education or work (e.g., sports schools, university programs, or sports federations). The study was based on a crosscase analysis of seven DCDEs in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Method: Initially, researchers conducted seven case studies of DCDEs in seven European countries. These case studies included a researcher shadowing practitioners within the environment for 2-3 months and conducting interviews with athletes and staff. A focus group of the researchers was then conducted to discuss the similarities and differences between the environments.

Results and Practical Implications: The results showed that all of the environments had their own approach to supporting athletes, which depended on the education level they were targeting, the type of athletes they had within the environment, and the resources they had available. However, the research was able to identify ten essential features. Practitioners are encouraged to consider the solutions to incorporate these key features within their environment: (1) having a person or team of people that are dedicated to dual career support, (2) athletes have access to the appropriate expert support, (3) there is

collaboration across the whole environment (including sport, education and private life of athletes), (4) there is an understanding of dual career from the whole environment, (5) athletes have role models and mentors, (6) the environment supports the whole person, (7) the environment empowers athletes, (8) there are individual, flexible solutions to athletes demands, (9) there is care of athlete's mental health and wellbeing, (10) there is an open approach to the development of the environment.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1469029221000364>

also see the TASS blog on this topic:

<https://blog.tass.gov.uk/how-to-build-successful-dual-career-environment-ten-things-practitioners-need-to-consider/>