
For student-athletes, the opportunity to pursue both academic and athletic excellence is a central part of life at Haverford. Student-athletes, together with their teammates and coaches, work hard to excel in their sport, and often this dedication complements and enriches academic pursuits. However, it is also a challenge to balance the time demands of both academics and athletics, and conflicts may arise that require the thoughtful attention of all involved -- student-athletes, faculty, the director of athletics, the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) and coaches -- in order to be resolved effectively. Due to many factors -- facility availability, conference scheduling requirements, the scheduling of special academic events, etc.-- scheduling conflicts between academics and athletics are an unavoidable reality of campus life at Haverford. The following document, the product of a collaborative effort on the part of FAPC and the Athletics Department, is intended to provide all constituencies with a uniform and consistent set of guidelines for navigating the balance between academics and athletics at Haverford College. Our aim with these guidelines is to provide all parties involved with a commonly shared and principled resource to guide them when conflicts of various forms arise between academics and athletics. As articulated below, these guidelines deal with three specific areas-- class choice, conflicts between classes and competitions, and conflicts between 4 and 7 pm. The guidelines also address the important role of the FAR as the steward of these guidelines. These guidelines are not a set of rigid rules but rather a set of general principles that are designed to maintain a certain level of flexibility in working out conflicts and to foster good communication and collaboration among faculty members, coaches, and students-athletes. There are two overarching principles running through these guidelines that transcend the specific concerns:

● First, these guidelines are intended to support student-athletes in their pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics, while also helping to maintain the clear understanding among all members of the community that academics are our top priority and stand as the central mission of the College.
● Second, it is the responsibility of the student-athlete to always bring scheduling conflicts to the attention of faculty and/or coaches as early as possible in order to arrive at mutually acceptable and appropriate solutions. Student-athletes are expected to approach conflict resolution maturely, and all groups should understand that high-level extracurricular participation often involves difficult choices with unavoidable consequences. For faculty and coaches, the director of athletics and the FAR should always be considered the “go-to” points of contact when negotiations around academic-athletic conflicts become complicated or difficult, in order to foster maximum consistency and fairness in how such situations are handled.

I. Class Choice, Academic Planning, and Advising
Following the central principles above, student-athletes, coaches, and faculty should work together to ensure that athletic scheduling concerns do not compromise a student-athlete’s planning and pursuit of his or her academic goals (e.g., choice of major and class choice). While consideration of scheduling concerns is inevitable and expected for student-athletes in certain specific circumstances (see below), it is also important for student-athletes to make academic decisions independently of athletic considerations as much as possible.
A. **Choice of major:** Student-athletes are encouraged and advised to choose their majors, minors, and concentrations based on their academic interests and career plans as opposed to scheduling concerns, and no student-athlete should be advised against choosing a major based on possible scheduling conflicts with athletics.

B. **Class choice and competition schedules:** Competition scheduling should not stand in the way of a student’s taking a particular course, particularly one that is central to one’s chosen academic program. For classes important to a student’s program with a single meeting time, conflicts between competitions and practices should be negotiated (see below). On the other hand, where multiple scheduling options are available (i.e. alternate semester offerings, multiple class sections, or lab sections), it is legitimate and even encouraged to use one’s competition schedule to choose classes, in order to avoid classes in which an unacceptable number of sessions would have to be missed to attend competitions. This is especially true in the case of selecting a lab section; with labs it should be kept in mind that in many cases labs cannot be made up on alternate days, and the ability to do make-up lab work is at the discretion of the instructor and should not necessarily be expected by students.

C. **Class choice and practice schedules:** Student-athletes should avoid choosing their classes based solely on their practice schedules. Classes that run until 4 pm at Haverford should not be systematically avoided for the sole purpose of getting to practice; coaches often start practice at a time that allows for transition (4:15 or 4:30), with the general understanding that there are almost always team members who will be arriving late due to academic commitments. However, it is important to note that classes at Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore that are scheduled later in the day may be treated differently in this regard, as differences in academic scheduling across campuses and travel time between campuses may pose unreasonable difficulties. Finally, classes should not be chosen based on assumptions about special practice schedules (e.g., during the month of February for Spring sports); during the pre-registration period at the start of semesters, it is important that students be able to freely consider class options without constraints from projected practice schedules either coincident with that period or later in the semester.

D. **Academic advising:** Academic advisors and their student-athlete advisees are encouraged to discuss the issue of academic and athletic scheduling openly, so that constructive and well-thought out choices are made that do not compromise the student’s pursuit of his or her academic goals and interests. In general, the procedure should be for advisors to first work with students to choose programmatic goals, and then work towards addressing any conflicts that might arise in pursuing these goals. With clear up-front communication in advising, student-athletes may be better prepared to talk to professors and coaches about potential conflicts far in advance, and faculty advisors and student-athletes together can maintain focus on academic goals when setting class schedules. While the faculty provides formal academic advising for students, coaches also play an important informal advising role in their often daily contact with their student-athletes. It is important that faculty and coaches are consistent in how students are advised.
E. Internships and other opportunities: Haverford students have a large array of opportunities available to them to expand and enrich their student experiences. These include internships (often sponsored by the Centers), study abroad, service- or research-oriented summer experiences, and a broad spectrum of other possibilities often pursued by student-athletes during the academic year, during breaks in the academic calendar, or during the summer. Student-athletes are encouraged to make the most of these opportunities and to fully investigate the possibility of engaging in these sorts of activities, even when scheduling conflicts may be present. On occasion, these experiences may require a student and his or her team to be flexible about athletic obligations like preseason and non-traditional segment practices. The entire Haverford community is committed to providing and supporting that flexibility to help enrich the experiences of all students through their participation in these experiential programs.

II. Conflicts Between Classes and Athletic Activities (competitions, practices)

An issue of central importance is how we deal with athletic contests that conflict with class sessions.

A. Classes and practice: Classes should never be missed or left early for practice.

B. Missing classes for competitions: All parties should work to minimize the number of class sessions missed for competitions. A relatively small number of absences should be acceptable to faculty. The exact number of class sessions that is reasonable to miss depends on several factors and should be negotiated between the faculty member and student at the beginning of the semester. Factors affecting the number of acceptable sessions include the nature of the session (i.e. discussions and labs are not always possible to “make up” in the same way that lecture courses are) and the number of times the class meets per week (missing even one once-a-week class is usually problematic). Faculty are strongly encouraged to work with students to find mutually agreeable solutions when classes are missed, and student-athletes are encouraged to be proactive and seek out their professors during office hours in order to stay on top of missed course material. However, it should also be noted that it is not the professor’s explicit responsibility to help student-athletes “make up” class time beyond their regular office hours. Therefore, student-athletes are advised to consider the potential challenges of taking a class in which several class sessions might be missed. Students who miss class for competitions have a minimized ability to miss additional classes for other reasons (i.e. sickness).

C. Missing competitions for classes: Just as students miss classes for competitions, it may be appropriate, under certain (relatively rare) circumstances, for a student-athlete to miss a competition in order to attend a class or lab. This would be especially critical a) in the case of a student whose grade is suffering due to having missed several class sessions, b) when several sessions will be missed which are impossible to make up (such as with a lab or a once-a-week seminar), and c) when a student informs the professor of the conflict at the last minute despite prior awareness of both schedules. If a faculty member feels that it may be appropriate for a student to miss a competition in order to attend a class or other session, he or she should communicate these concerns to the
athletic director and the FAR so that a collective decision can be made and the student-athlete advised appropriately. In the case of situations that are anticipated well ahead of time, student-athletes should work closely with professors and coaches to come to mutually acceptable decisions regarding which competition(s) will be missed to attend class.

D. **Pro-active communication**: Good communication around this issue is absolutely critical -- students should always communicate with the professor in person as early as possible in a semester to negotiate anticipated absences due to competitions. Student-athletes whose sports will be in season during a semester are expected to address this issue with their professors within the first two weeks of class. All known conflicts should be discussed as well as the possibility of conflicts that could arise over the course of the athletic season. Likewise, faculty should be clear and consistent in their syllabi and from the beginning of a semester about their expectations and concerns. Faculty should also be as explicit as possible at the beginning of a semester (or otherwise as far in advance as possible) about required non-class events like field trips, outside speakers, film screenings, other experiential class components, etc. Faculty are especially encouraged to contact the athletic director directly if anticipating special academic conflicts that may arise during times often used for athletic contests (Saturdays, for example). In especially complicated situations, faculty and coaches are encouraged to speak to the FAR and director of athletics directly rather than rely solely on student-athletes to shoulder the burden of communication.

E. **Athletic scheduling**: The athletic department, with the FAR’s occasional input, works to optimize how departure times for away competitions and preparation time for home competitions affect class attendance. Wherever possible, departure times are chosen to minimize class conflicts.

F. **Warm-up for home competitions**: Pre-game warm-up periods and visits to training staff before competitions are important to the health and performance of athletes, and this can add an extra time constraint for athletes participating in home competitions. If these activities conflict with classes, students should be open and proactive about discussing and negotiating any additional time constraints with course instructors, and instructors should be ready to openly address these additional possible conflicts (especially with athletes who may need pre-game treatment for injuries).

G. **First week of classes**: Before students’ academic schedules are finalized at the start of a semester, classes should not be missed for contests, and early-semester contests are scheduled with this in mind.

III. Academic Events Between 4 and 7 pm

For several reasons including athletic considerations, classes are usually not offered between 4pm and 7pm. Most activities during the week required of active student-athletes occur during this time period. However, some weekday athletics events are scheduled to start earlier than 4 pm due to travel and light considerations. Afternoon laboratory sessions will on occasion keep students in the lab past 4 pm in order to complete the day’s activities. It is also the case that academic departments often schedule special academic events such as guest speakers and talks
by job candidates between 4-7pm. While attendance at these special events (talks, symposia, etc.) is usually not absolutely required for students, these special events are of vital importance to the intellectual life of the College. For each of the reasons above, 4 pm is a “gray” dividing line and does not function as an absolute cutoff between academic and athletic activities. Below are several guidelines for all parties to consider in helping student-athletes negotiate conflicts between their athletic activities and other events occurring after 4 pm, in order to maximize their overall experience as both students and athletes:

A. Avoiding required class activities between 4 and 7 pm: Many non-academic activities in college life, including athletics but also many other activities, are intentionally scheduled between 4-7 pm. Classes are not scheduled during this time according to the faculty handbook. Faculty are expected to be respectful of this formalized statement and to make every effort to avoid scheduling any extra required academic sessions, such as recitations, required thesis meetings, and make-up classes, between 4 and 7 pm. Additionally, instructors should end class promptly at 4 pm so that students are able to get to their other activities in a timely fashion. Students’ participation in afternoon labs may run late when needing extra time to complete their lab activities, but labs are not in general planned to run beyond 4 pm.

B. Guest speakers and special academic events: Guest speakers offer students special opportunities for experiences that cannot be gained in the classroom and can be critical to students’ scholarly growth and long-term academic and career plans. Particularly for juniors and seniors, departments have legitimate expectations of their majors beyond attendance and performance in classes, and occasionally this will involve attending talks between 4 and 7 pm or at otherwise conflicting times. Students should always feel comfortable asking their coaches to miss practice to attend special events, especially speakers within one’s major department and/or associated with a particular class the student is taking. With enough advance warning, every effort should be made on the part of coaches to accommodate such requests.

C. Scheduling special academic events outside of 4-7 pm: Faculty members, academic departments and other programs that host speakers should strongly consider times outside the 4-7 pm time slot (or at least after 6 pm) in order to achieve greater variability in the campus schedule of academic events. Additionally, academic departments should attempt to communicate speaker schedules as early as possible so that student-athletes have ample time to negotiate conflicts. Events directly connected to classes should be listed in the course syllabi if at all possible. Hosts of special events that might cause conflicts for several student-athletes are encouraged to communicate with the athletic director about the best way to resolve such conflicts. Every effort should also be made to videotape speakers; however, watching the video does not usually fully make up for actual attendance at the event.

D. Search talks: Talks between 4 and 7 by candidates for faculty positions are especially important with respect to adequate student participation in the hiring process. Student-athletes should work as hard as possible to participate in this process if the opportunity arises in their major or academic program.
IV. Mutual Participation and Appreciation

There are a variety of different activities and events (academic, athletic, and extra-curricular), occurring each day at Haverford College, and time constraints and conflicts are an inevitable part of campus life for everyone. Acknowledging these time constraints, faculty should note that their attendance at home competitions is both encouraged and greatly appreciated by students-athletes and coaches. Likewise, coaches and team members are encouraged to attend academic events that are milestones in athletes’ academic growth, such as senior thesis presentations, poster sessions, art showings, etc. Such “cross-over” participation and recognition of student accomplishment by faculty, coaches, and peer athletes can deepen relationships, strengthen our community, and lead to an augmented academic and athletic experience for students.

V. Important Institutional Officers and Their Roles

Since much of Haverford community life is transacted through direct personal contact, the success of these guidelines depends on developing and maintaining relationships and keeping open lines of communication between all parties. A unified and clearly communicated approach between faculty and coaches to any conflicts is especially important to support and guide students’ own choices. While direct contact between faculty and coaches is encouraged, several important community members fall at the center of interactions between athletics and academics; the most visible and central are the Faculty Athletic Representative and the Athletic Director.

A. Faculty Athletic Representative. The FAR is a tenured (note: depends on approval of FAPC proposal to the faculty) faculty member appointed by Academic Council each academic year in consultation with the Athletic Director and fills an NCAA-mandated role with very few NCAA-defined duties. However, the Haverford FAR has several important roles clarified through continuing discussions about the relationships between athletics and academics. The FAR is the steward of these community guidelines and will work to ensure that all associated parties are aware of them and are following them. When further community discussion around these issues is needed, the FAR will organize and mediate the discussion.

1. The FAR serves as a liaison for the faculty to athletics; faculty are especially encouraged to direct concerns or questions regarding athletics to the FAR, who meets regularly with the Athletic Director.
2. The FAR serves as a liaison for athletics to the faculty. Coaches are encouraged to use the FAR as a resource to communicate with specific faculty or the faculty in general.
3. The FAR orients new student-athletes to these guidelines and to the expectations of the faculty.
4. The FAR and Director of Athletics orient new faculty to these guidelines and to “best practices” contained herein.
5. The FAR can serve as a mediator (sometimes in consultation with the Athletic Director) between faculty, students, and/or coaches to contextualize and negotiate particularly difficult academic-athletic conflicts.

6. The FAR maintains a highly visible presence for both the students and the faculty, through orientation activities and through attendance at a variety of academic and athletic events.

B. Athletic Director. The Athletic Director reports to the Dean of the College and oversees the athletic program. All constituencies are encouraged to contact the AD at any time with concerns about any aspects of athletics on campus.

C. Faculty Liaisons to teams. Starting in 2009-2010, each team has a designated faculty liaison. The faculty liaison can serve an important role as a link between the coach and faculty and as an informal advisor to team members. The faculty liaison role is self defined and allows maximum flexibility for faculty to engage in a limited or extended role with team members. Any faculty member interested in becoming a faculty liaison should contact the Director of Athletics.
Appendix

Proposed text for Faculty Handbook (proposed May 2012, for action Sept. 2012):
The Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) is a faculty member, at the level of associate or higher, appointed yearly by Academic Council in close consultation with the Athletic Director to fill an NCAA-mandated position. The Haverford FAR has several roles and responsibilities related to supporting and facilitating the relationship between academics and athletics (see The Community Guidelines for Academics and Athletics for a detailed description). Most importantly, the FAR acts as the steward of The Community Guidelines for Academics and Athletics and will work to ensure that all associated parties are aware of them and are following them. In addition, the FAR serves as a liaison, both for the faculty to athletics and for athletics to the faculty. Some of the specific responsibilities of the FAR include orienting new student-athletes, coaches, and faculty to the spirit and details of the Guidelines, helping to mediate the resolution of scheduling conflicts between athletics and academics, and meeting with the Athletic Director on a weekly basis to discuss ongoing and emergent issues. The FAR reports on a yearly basis to the Provost, EPC, and the Athletic Director the activities of the prior year and any outstanding issues for community discussion during the following year.