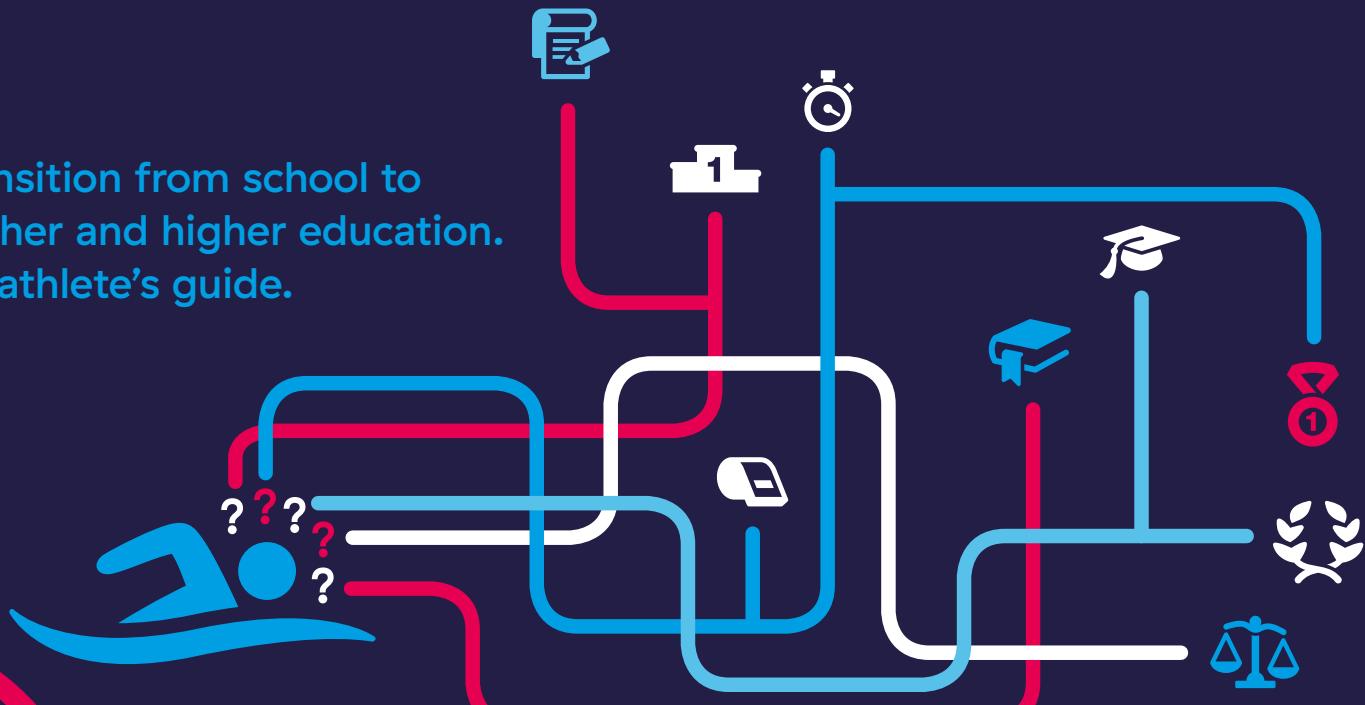




Scottish  
Swimming

Transition from school to  
further and higher education.  
An athlete's guide.



This document is a guide for athletes looking to transition from school through to higher and further education whilst continuing a competitive career within Olympic Swimming, Para Swimming or Diving.



Scottish Swimming has worked with partners to provide suitable options within educational establishments across Scotland and the rest of the UK (and in some cases abroad).

If you are in S5 or S6 and are looking at academic and swimming options then this guide aims to help you make **EDUCATED AND INFORMED** decisions about your future.



# Step 1

# 1. WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?

## Prioritising Academics

The first thing I'm looking at is the course and the University or College that is best for me.



## Prioritising Swimming

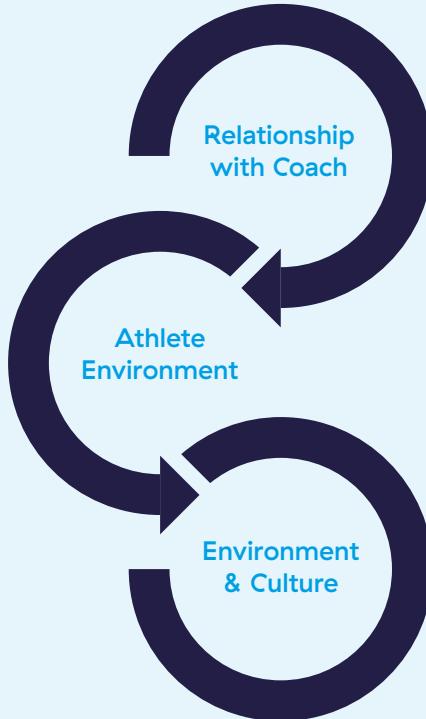
The first thing I'm looking at is the swimming programme and coach that fit my swimming aspirations.

Ideally you can find a combination

that delivers on **BOTH** priorities!

## R.A.R.E.

When considering which swimming programmes and coaches you wish to approach, it is recommended that you apply R.A.R.E.:



**Right  
Athlete  
Right  
Environment**

Once you are clear on your priorities there are other aspects that you may want to consider.

These might include:

Potential Progression →

Moving away from home and how far!



Finances 

Benefits of the Current Swimming Programme 

Family 

Talk these over with your parent or guardian first

# Step 2

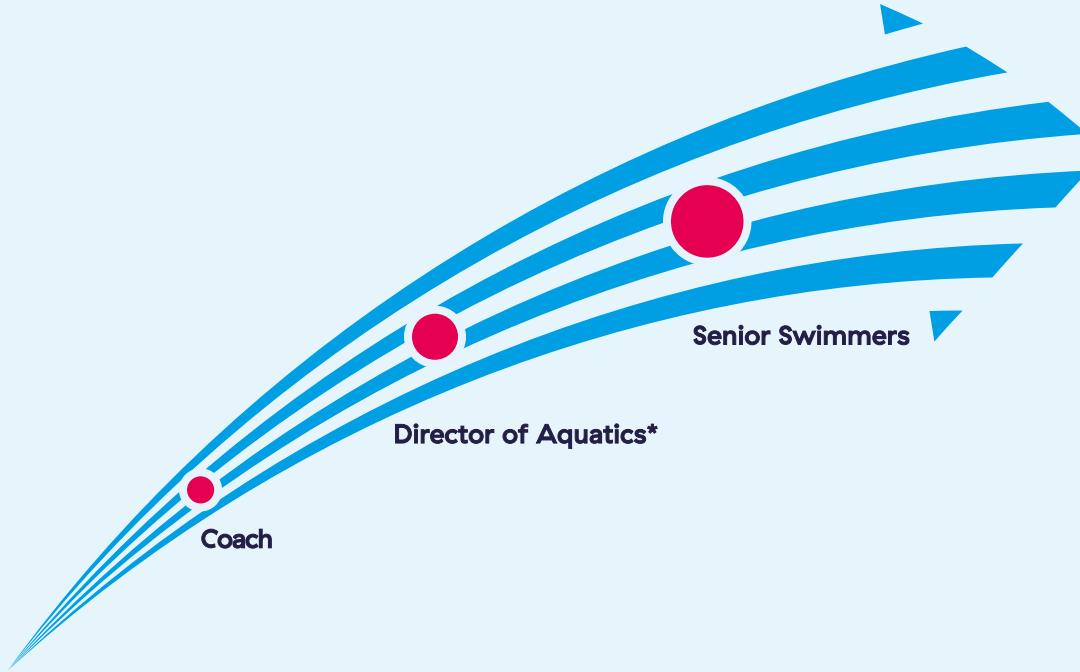
## 2. WHEN SHOULD YOU APPLY?

Making decisions against a tight timescale without the relevant information, knowledge and understanding will make the process more difficult, or lead to reactive and poor decision making.



Start your considerations early and begin the process at least a year before you want to apply to go to University or College.

## Who should you talk to?



\*The National Coach and Director of Aquatics are happy to discuss options with any swimmer looking to make the transition.

# Tips and Considerations



Have an initial, open and honest discussion with your home coach and keep communicating throughout the process.

**Talk**

## Research

Research the choice of University or College using UCAS ([ucas.com](http://ucas.com)) and Discover Uni ([discoveruni.gov.uk](http://discoveruni.gov.uk))

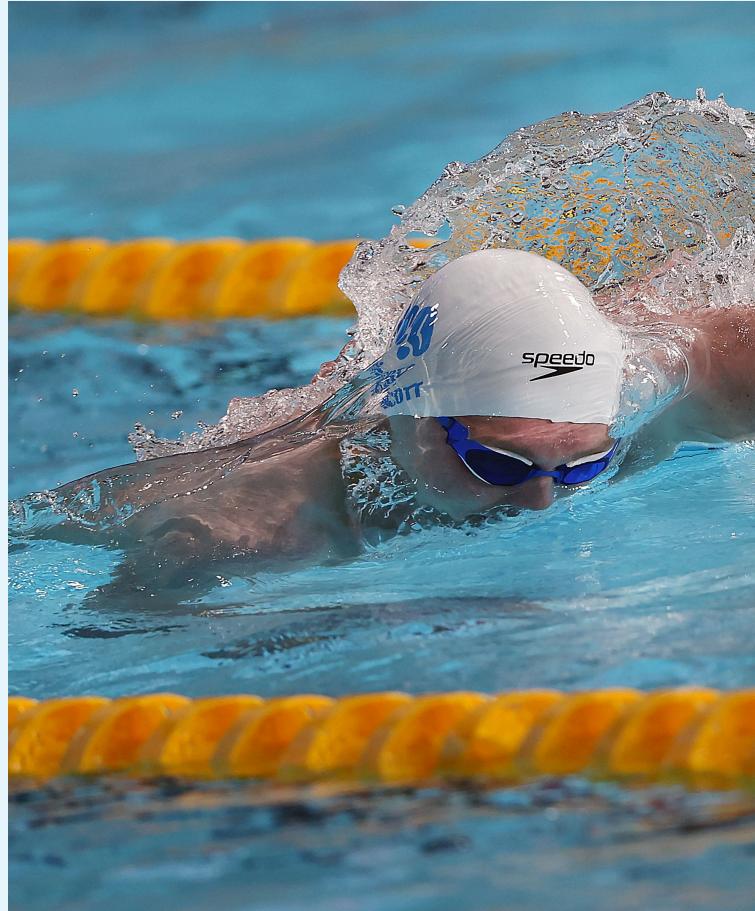
We recommend that you should as a minimum, consider each of the Scottish Performance Centres (Stirling, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh) and the linked Universities & Colleges.

**Options**



Find out more about  
the following, then  
apply Right Athlete  
Right Environment:

- Coaching ethos & approach
- Group size
- Location
- Training times
- Approach to flexible study
- Bursaries & Scholarships
- Support
- Flexibility of entry criteria



# Step 3

### 3. HOW DO YOU PREPARE?

Make time to visit prospective Colleges and Universities and their swim programmes. Organise additional or alternative visits through the University Director of Sport or Head Coach (not just on Open Days).

Look around and find out about:

- Accommodation blocks
- Athlete accommodation
- Catering options
- Distance from the training venue
- Transport links
- Environment
- Facilities

**Be clear on what's available**

Discuss

**TALK TO THE PROSPECTIVE COACH** about coaching approach, services and support. Learn as much as possible. Ask swimmers within the programme about balancing swimming and study.

Follow Up

**FOLLOW UP AT MEETS** with the prospective coach — the more you communicate, the easier it is to understand how things work.

Give Options

**REMEMBER – DON'T LIMIT YOUR CHOICES**  
to one University, College or Programme.

Learn life skills early



Cooking



Cleaning



Laundry



Budgeting



Shopping

# Step 4

## 4. HOW TO WRITE YOUR APPLICATION

Remember the UCAS application is an academic one, not a swimming one. Qualifications will get you considered for entry – not swimming times or diving scores!



Your “personal statement” is a key factor in University and College decision making so take time over it and structure it carefully. Use the support around you. Speak to people that have experience in writing personal statements for example the school Guidance teacher, Performance Lifestyle Practitioner (if supported by SS) or parents.

# Tips and Considerations

Keep your list of achievements to a key few and focus on your transferable skills

Time Management



Focus



Independent Thought



Decision making



Organisation



Communication Skills



Discipline

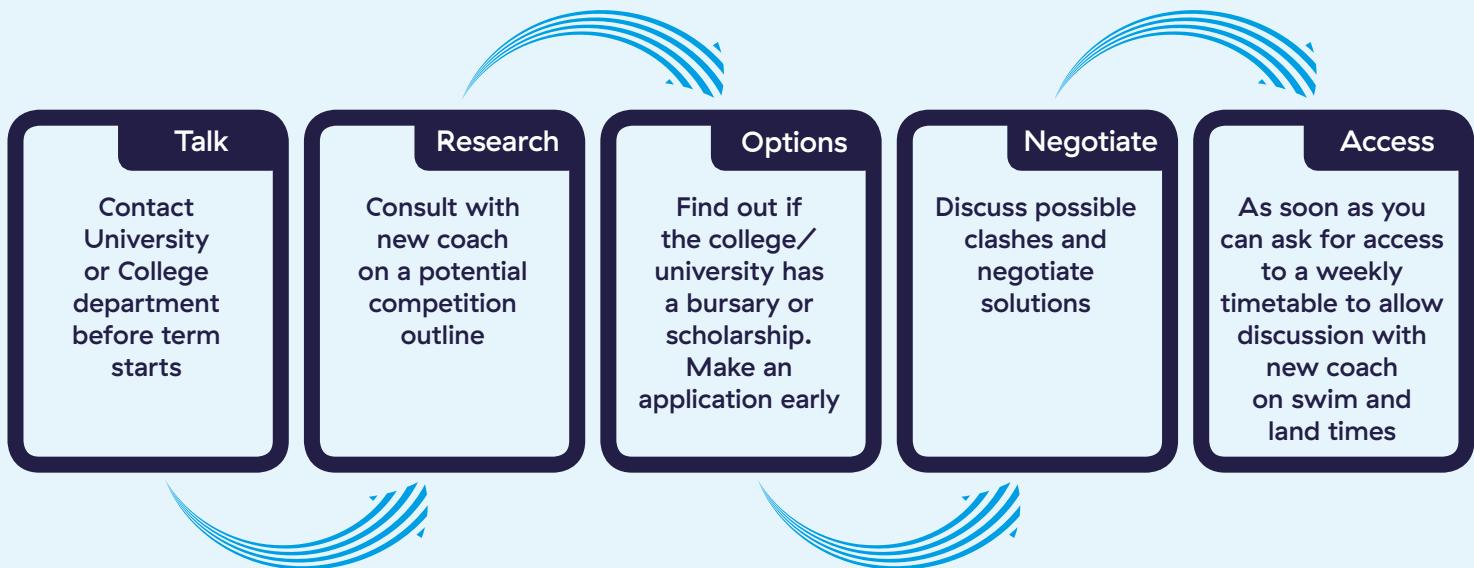


Commitment & Resilience



Stress the integrated planning that has gone into current academic and sporting success and the lessons you have learned through your involvement in the sport.

## When you make your final decision and send it to UCAS...



YOU, not your parent or guardian, should contact the University or College department to request a meeting before the start of University term to discuss how the two areas of sport and university could be best managed over the coming years.



Try to arrange this during the summer before the term starts. Most University and College staff are around part of the time at least, marking re-sits etc.

Research the processes for academic flexibility and the student support services available at your institution so that you know how to go about getting help when you need it. Remember academic flexibility is more likely to be possible when discussed well in advance of key dates.



## Considering a move overseas?

Scotland has over the years developed excellent opportunities to combine study with competitive swimming **BUT...**



... If you are thinking about moving overseas you will want to consider the following:

Reduced support  
from Scottish and  
British Swimming



Levels of swimming and  
diving programmes  
accessible abroad



History of results delivered  
by British swimmers



Finances and potential  
financial support



Level of coaching



Scholarships



Availability for British and  
Scottish trials events and  
international meets



Access to long  
course competition



Status of University team  
(swimming and education)



Access to  
support services



If you are looking at US university and college programmes, be absolutely clear about the financial ramifications and the competitive priorities within the US Programme compared to those in Britain.

The lead-in time and planning stage is longer. 18 months is recommended for visa applications, academic research and visits. For the US, the equivalent to UCAS is the Fulbright Commission [www.fulbright.org.uk](http://www.fulbright.org.uk)



## Remember...

As an athlete looking to move on to university or college and change programme

### THIS IS YOUR DECISION!

- Consult with your home coach
- Be clear as to what your priorities are and why
- Give yourself options
- Communicate! Over-do it, keep everyone in the loop
- Start the process early
- Ask for help and advice if you need it

If you are looking within Scotland, there are primarily four centres linked to universities and colleges to consider:

## University of Aberdeen

**Links to:**

Robert Gordon University  
Aberdeen College

**Coaches:**

Patrick Miley  
Gregor McMillan

**For further information contact:**

Performance Coach  
Patrick Miley  
[patrick.miley@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:patrick.miley@abdn.ac.uk)

**Website:**

[www.abdn.ac.uk/uoaps](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/uoaps)

## University of Edinburgh

**Links to:**

Napier University  
Queen Margaret College  
Heriot Watt University  
Edinburgh College

**Coaches:**

Chris Jones,  
Mat Trodden,  
Ross Douglas

**For further information contact:**

Head of Swimming  
Chris Jones  
[chris.jones@ed.ac.uk](mailto:chris.jones@ed.ac.uk)

**Website:**

[www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise/  
performance](http://www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise/performance)

## City of Glasgow Swim Team

**Links to:**

University of Glasgow  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
University of the West of Scotland  
University of Strathclyde  
City of Glasgow College

**Coaches:**

Danielle Brayson

**For further information contact:**

Head Performance Coach  
Danielle Brayson  
[danielle.brayson@googlemail.com](mailto:danielle.brayson@googlemail.com)

**Website:**

[www.swimglasgow.co.uk/club-  
information/university-swimming](http://www.swimglasgow.co.uk/club-information/university-swimming)

## University of Stirling

**Links to:**

Forth Valley College

**Coaches:**

Steven Tigg  
Brad Hay  
Josh Williamson

**For further information contact:**

High Performance Swim Coach

Josh Williamson

[josh.williamson@stir.ac.uk](mailto:josh.williamson@stir.ac.uk)

**Website:**

[www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/sport-at-  
stirling/performance-sport](http://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/sport-at-stirling/performance-sport)



# Good luck and enjoy the journey!



[scottishswimming.com](http://scottishswimming.com)

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