

PORTAL Transition Officer Guide

Supporting Olympians Transitioning to Real Life with care for their
mental health

Erasmus+ Project • Real Life Transition Officers' Operational Manual



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1. Introduction

The "Supporting Olympians Transitioning to Real Life in Concern of their Mental Health" (PORTAL) project, funded by the ERASMUS-SPORT-2024-SCP call, promoted by the European Commission, aims to address the intricate challenges faced by Olympians during their transition to post-retirement life. The project's core objective is to develop and implement an inclusive online platform, complemented by a network of Real-Life Transition Officers, to provide comprehensive support to Olympians, particularly those facing fewer opportunities

This guide provides procedures, requirements, and guidance for Transition Officers Post-Athletic Career (TOPs), who act as the cornerstone of athlete-centred support across partner organisations.

The guide combines procedural clarity with a human-centred approach. It reflects the core values of PORTAL—empathy, empowerment, well-being, and community—and ensures coherence with Erasmus+ good governance standards in sport.

2. Selection procedures

2.1 Eligibility requirements

Candidates must demonstrate relevant education and experience in psychology, sport sciences, education, or related fields. Essential qualifications include:

- A minimum of 3 years of experience in athlete support, dual career counselling, or welfare services.
- Proven understanding of athlete mental health and well-being.
- Knowledge of European and national frameworks on athlete transition and dual careers.
- Ethical integrity, confidentiality, and inclusivity.

2.2 Selection steps

The recruitment process will be transparent and merit-based. It includes:

1. Open call through the following [link](#).
2. Submission of a motivation letter and a 2-page CV.
3. Evaluation according to a scoring grid covering motivation, empathy, adaptability, and ethical reasoning.

2.3 Appointment and certification

Successful candidates will be certified as Transition Officers Post-Athletic Career (TOPs) after completing the online training available [here](#). Each officer will sign a collaboration / volunteer agreement with the hosting organisation, defining responsibilities, reporting duties, and ethical obligations.

3. Core competencies and skills

Transition Officers combine psychological insight, practical guidance, and community engagement. Their work is both scientific and deeply human.

- Understanding of athlete life cycles and career transitions.
- Knowledge of mental health and coping strategies.
- Skills in motivational interviewing and empowerment-based coaching.
- Capacity for active listening and empathic communication.
- Ability to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams.
- Digital literacy to use the PORTAL online platform.

4. Roles and responsibilities

TOPs provide holistic support for Olympians before, during, and after their transition from sport. Their primary duties include:

- Conducting individual needs assessments.
- Delivering tailored guidance on life skills, mental health, and employability.
- Maintaining regular contact and follow-up for at least three years post-retirement.
- Coordinating with psychologists, career coaches, and NOC / NSF staff, if necessary.
- Documenting progress and feedback through the PORTAL platform.
- Promoting awareness sessions and supporting athletes facing fewer opportunities.

5. Procedures and workflow

The following steps ensure consistency across all participating countries and organisations:

1. Initial contact – via the [PORTAL platform](#) or NOC referral.
2. Assessment – a structured interview to map the athlete’s psychological, social, and professional profile.
3. Support plan – design of a personalised action plan including mental health, education, and career pathways.
4. Monitoring – regular follow-ups every six months.
5. Evaluation – progress report and athlete feedback at each stage.
6. Transition closure – final meeting and connection to long-term support networks.

6. Ethical principles and safeguarding

All TOPs must adhere to professional ethics and safeguarding protocols. Confidentiality, informed consent, and non-discrimination are non-negotiable principles.

Key values include:

- Respect for athlete autonomy and dignity.
- Promotion of equality, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity.
- Clear professional boundaries and avoidance of dual relationships.
- Immediate reporting of safeguarding concerns through designated channels.

7. Training and supervision

Transition Officers will undergo a structured training programme through the [Sport Academy platform](#), including modules on:

- Athlete life transitions and dual careers.
- Mental health awareness and first-line psychological support.
- Use of the PORTAL platform and data management.
- Ethical dilemmas and supervision practices.

As well as the following annexes:

- Personalised Transition Plan
- Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement
- Athlete Intake Form

Supervision sessions will occur quarterly, fostering peer learning, reflection, and professional growth.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of TOPs will be assessed annually based on quantitative and qualitative indicators:

- Number of athletes supported and follow-up duration.
- Athlete satisfaction and progress in transition.
- Quality of documentation and communication.
- Contribution to dissemination and awareness activities.

Feedback loops will connect athletes, TOPs, NOCs, and the PORTAL consortium to ensure continuous improvement.