



Academic Athletic Coach
A Student Athlete Development Professional
Suggested Job Detail & Description



Position Summary: Responsible for working with student athletes, parents, school staff, head coaches, athletic directors and school administrators to develop and coordinate a high impact student athlete development and support program aimed at fostering positive youth development and growth through sport. Designed to work both during and after school hours. Can be created as part-time or full-time depending on number of student athletes served. It is recommended that a part-time **20-hour per week** position can work with **up to 150 student athletes** with complete athletic coaching staff buy-in.

General Responsibilities:

1. Act as a caring-adult mentor to provide academic support, advocacy, and advising.
2. Create an academic support system in collaboration with school resources, admins, counselors, teachers, and coaches (i.e. study tables, monitoring, tutoring, one-on-one meetings, etc.).
3. Assist student athletes in setting academic, athletic, personal, social, and career goals and in evaluating progress in those areas.
4. Engage student athletes in college and career planning activities and ensure SAT/ACT test preparation and test taking.
5. Educate interested student athletes and parents about NCAA initial eligibility; support and track student progress toward NCAA initial eligibility.
6. Conduct or coordinate life skills educational workshops and provide opportunities for student athletes to develop transferable life and leadership skills.
7. Coordinate effective service learning and community outreach initiatives.
8. Establish incentive/reward programs to recognize participation, effort and achievement.
9. Foster relationships and nurture involvement with parents and family, volunteers, tutors, other caring-adult mentor and program supports in the community.
10. Establish appropriate referral networks for mental health and wellness support when needed.
11. Collect ongoing data for evaluation, assessment and program promotion.
12. Attend *AthLife Foundation & 3ACE* annual conferences and trainings.

Education: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Master's degree or pursuit of preferred. Additional School District parameters, requirements and certifications may apply

Other Requirements:

1. Demonstrated experience with the targeted population of high school aged students.
2. Knowledge of the college admission process, financial aid procedures, SAT/ACT test preparations, NCAA eligibility rules, and career and life planning strategies.
3. An understanding of working with diverse populations in challenging environments.
4. Ability to work during the school day, as well as after school to perform job duties.
5. Ability to carry out multiple responsibilities ranging from mentoring in a one-on-one setting to facilitating small and large groups.
6. Proven ability to build relationships with a broad range of people with strong communication skills, allowing one to establish trust and build rapport.
7. Strong organizational and basic computer skills, the ability to meet reporting deadlines.

The Academic Athletic Coach Profession Rationale & Factors for Consideration

The AthLife Foundation recognizes the importance and sometimes the challenge in selecting the right Academic-Athletic Coach. Unique funding scenarios, union rules and newly created positions can influence the candidate pool.

The profession of the “academic-athletic advisor/counselor” has evolved greatly over the last 50 years in the collegiate world. Relatively unknown and new to secondary education, this is a position that requires a unique skill set, training and education. The AthLife Foundation helps schools develop their Academic Athletic Coach positions while understanding the numerous challenges schools face in establishing this unique professional position. The AthLife Foundation fundamentally assumes the schools/districts apply for funding to the AthLife Foundation, or seek to create this professional position through the aide of the Alliance for Academic Athletic Coaches & Educators (3ACE) in order to change norms and create additional resources for their student athletes.

Weaved into the AthLife Foundation philosophy is the notion that no single program element is more important than that of the relationship that develops between Academic-Athletic Coach and their student athletes. Schools must work to provide a clearly defined role and access for the Academic Athletic Coach for these critical relationships can develop. Academic Athletic Coach come from a variety of educational and experiential backgrounds, largely from the field of education, psychology, counseling, or sociology. **The position is intended to support holistic student athlete development, not solely monitor academic eligibility and track academic performance.**

The AthLife Foundation strongly recommends that each school evaluate potential dual roles and role conflicts carefully when seeking out qualified applicants for the position. Dual roles and role conflicts may occur when current staff: head coaches; assistant coaches; teachers, counselors or additional school staff assume the responsibility of the Academic Athletic Coach.

The position is recognized as a relatively new concept in secondary education, and although the Academic Athletic Coach positions are filled with a variety of professional education backgrounds, the relationship that builds is one of a “counseling nature”. The American School Counselor Association gives us one view of dual roles and role conflict:

The professional school counselor:

A) Avoids dual relationships that might impair his/her objectivity and increase the risk of harm to the student (e.g., counseling one’s family members, close friends or associates). If a dual relationship is unavoidable, the counselor is responsible for taking action to eliminate or reduce the potential for harm. Such safeguards might include informed consent, consultation, supervision and documentation. B) Avoids dual relationships with school personnel that might infringe on the integrity of the counselor/student relationship

Further research on the subject states:

Role conflicts arise when the expectations attached to one role call for behavior which is incompatible with that of another role (Kitchener, 1988). A dual role relationship exists when an individual simultaneously or sequentially participates in two role categories (Kitchener, 1986).

Carroll, Schneider & Wesley (1985) concluded that a dual relationship exists when, in addition to the professional relationship, there is some other relationship with the individual: friend, family member, student or business partner.

Other Factors and Issues to Consider:

The AthLife Foundation views a school's application for grant funding, or desire to establish this position as an action to create an additional resource for student athletes, not to create a duplicative role for a current resource already in existence within a team or athletic department culture.

The Academic Athletic Coach position requires significant relationship and trust building. Confidentiality is a must, and Academic Athletic Coach need to position themselves as an advocate with the student athletes best interest in mind first and foremost. Student athletes should feel that there is a support outlet for them without jeopardizing their status within their team or playing time. Situations may arise where what may be in the best interest of the student athlete may not be in the "perceived" best interest of the team or coaching staff.

Although Academic-Athletic Coaches do become part of the team culture, playing a role in on field coaching should be met with caution. That does not mean the Academic-Athletic Coach is not a presence in the athletic environments. As part of relationship and rapport building, Academic Athletic Coaches find themselves on the sidelines at games and at practices in a general support role. It is very important for student athletes to see their Academic-Athletic Coach care about them in their athletic domain.

The long-term goal for The AthLife Foundation and the Alliance for Academic Athletic Coaches & Educators (3ACE), is to aide schools in creating a sustainable, valued professional position that becomes part of the fabric of the school and school system. The position by design is non-traditional. Non-traditional school hours need to be set up for Academic-Athletic Coaches to have access to school, staff, and student athletes both during the school day as well as after school and even some weekends, and an after school component to a school program is strongly recommended

If current school staff members (i.e. teachers, counselors, etc.) are to be considered, school applicants need to provide a clear outline of the current contractual obligations and Academic-Athletic Coach/Advisor responsibilities.

Summary:

- Schools should look to avoid or minimize the potential for dual roles or role conflict in hiring the Academic Athletic Coach.
- Schools should approach hiring athletic coaches that will coach student athletes in a sport at some point during the school year with caution.
- Unique scenarios and lack of quality candidate issues should be discussed formally with school administration and AthLife Foundation consultants, staff, or veteran school administration familiar with the process.