



Project 18

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Guidance Document



NEEDS ANALYSIS GUIDANCE

This document is written in support of the athlete Needs Analysis and details how that process can be best supported. While we feel the majority of athletes will benefit from this Analysis being carried out as a question and answer conversation this may not suit all, so please discuss with your athlete if they have any obvious preferences as to other formats, for e.g. there is nothing stopping the athlete doing this themselves or talking it through with a training partner with both documents in front of them.

The document is split into three sections - role definition, facilitating the process and the Needs Analysis itself.

1. YOUR ROLE

You are responsible for guiding or facilitating a needs analysis, the results of which we hope will inform and better direct the subsequent stages of the Project 18 process. The analysis itself is broken into four sections and an athlete who has identified their needs across these sections we hope will have a much clearer understanding of not only themselves but also what they are going to do upon leaving further education and how triathlon may or may not fit into this. The four sections are:

1. **Aspirations** - what does the athlete want to achieve, what are their short/medium term life goals
2. **Lifestyle Needs** - needs that are not directly related to education/work or triathlon
3. **Education or Employment Needs** - how work/university may or may not fit with Triathlon
4. **Triathlon Needs** - if Triathlon is important to you what do you need to help maximise your potential

Consideration should be given to who and/or how notes are captured. Some athletes may well think more effectively with a pen in their hand others might prefer the facilitator to take the notes; a voice recording might work to allow both parties to be able to think freely without taking notes.



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2. FACILITATING THE PROCESS

Effective facilitation is a real skill and in itself can be challenging, to support you we thought it might help to share our **top 10 tips**;

- 1** Possibly most important is your support in helping the athlete with being able to define between wants and needs. Simply put needs are our necessities and wants our desires, **we can live without wants but not without needs**; it is important to be aware that we don't always need what we want!
- 2** Athletes might feel there is a perceived right or wrong answer - that is absolutely not the case - **there are no right or wrong answers here**, we all have different preferences
- 3** Be aware of your position and biases on all answers, we (humans) naturally seek to confirm what we already believe to be true (confirmation bias). To help prevent this **check and challenge all answers regardless** of whether you agree/disagree and **absolutely refrain from leading athletes down a particular path**
- 4** In line with the above also seek to **suspend your own judgement** and take great care not to project or bring your own beliefs and journey into the process. Your reactions - body language and questioning style - can be **leading and suggestive** and can leak out really quite easily. Support the athlete in making **their own best decision** by being as neutral as possible with all comments/body language/intonation/etc.
- 5** Support athletes to see **both sides of the coin** wherever possible and facilitate conversations that **promote an open mind**



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2. FACILITATING THE PROCESS

Read on for tips 6- 10 on effective facilitation;

6 Keep to **open questions** e.g. those that start with 'what/how/tell me about ...' instead of closed 'yes/no' answer questions!

7 Don't feel that you have to ask all the questions in this guide! They are **only** there to facilitate a conversation and get the athletes **thinking about their needs**, if the conversation is good don't feel the need to constrain it

8 While we have set the needs analysis in what we feel is a logical order this may not be the case for the athlete you are supporting - **let them move around sections** as best suits them and come back to others when it fits

It can be **very normal for an individual at this age to have little or no real idea on their future career** - the whole purpose of this analysis is to open the dialogue and start thinking about the future. If athletes really don't know assure them that this is **very normal** and work with them to **keep options open**. The whole purpose of this process is to explore their thinking and increase their understanding and awareness. In a similar vein an athlete **changing their mind** is also perfectly normal too so encourage athletes to **revisit the process** if this happens

10 Anything in **navy** text relates to a question or a sub question and appears in the athletes own **Needs Analysis** and **red** text alerts you to how many questions are in the relevant sections. **Dark grey** text gives additional context, advice and/or information that might help you in facilitating the question and appears **only** in this guide.



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1. ASPIRATIONS This section has 2 main questions

Q1: What are you aspiring to achieve in the short (0-6 mth), medium (3-5 yrs) & long (8-10 yrs) term?

- This question is designed to give direction and purpose to the following sections and will help to set a goal to work towards.
- Aspirations could relate to triathlon, full/part time education. full/part time work, time out or other interests - all should be considered.
- Think about the balance of work v sport v education and what is most important? Understanding this will help in prioritising.
- It takes time in triathlon to realise true sporting potential and for most this is a long term (8-10yr) process.
- Regards career and other options athletes may find thinking 3 years or further ahead (medium & long term) difficult, that's perfectly OK.
- If that is the case look at what the options are and try to keep them as open as possible, in so doing consider the following sub-questions:

SQ: What options have you considered?

- e.g. travel, moving away from home, staying at home, getting a job, doing a degree, etc.

SQ: Having considered these options where might you see yourself in 6 months/3 years/8years?

SQ: Having considered these options what might your long term career or sporting aspirations be?

- If unclear think about what you enjoy doing or learning more about and consider the routes to jobs or degrees or careers in those areas.

Q2: Who might you need support from to achieve your aspirations ?

- Important to consider as the answer could influence further sections of this analysis.



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2. LIFESTYLE NEEDS This section has 3 main questions

These questions look to define interests and needs not directly related to education/work and triathlon - e.g. Lifestyle Needs. This section is about the athlete as a person beyond their education, work or triathlon needs.

Q1: Outside of employment/education and triathlon what/who is important to you?

- This might include commitment to another activity or person, interest in taking up another activity or hobby, having close friends around you, etc. If struggling question the athlete to tease out the stuff they do that they enjoy or that inspires or motivates or drives them. Consider the following sub-question if needed:

SQ: What do you really enjoy doing?

Q2: Who do you need around you to achieve your aspirations?

- This might include: parents/guardian, other relatives, friends, potential employer(s), coach, physiotherapist, other support staff (strength coach, psychologist, nutritionist, etc.).

SQ: Who are the important people right now for you and what happens if this changes in the future?

- Consider who is important presently in supporting the above and the impact any change here might have.

Q3: What might you need support with to achieve your aspirations?

- This might include cooking, cleaning, clothes washing skills, transport, academic support (e.g help with dyslexia), time management and organisation, etc.

SQ: What support do you have now and what happens if this changes in the future?

- Consider who is important presently in supporting the above and the impact any change here might have.



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3. EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT NEEDS This section has 1 main question

This question looks to establish where an athlete might look to base themselves dependent on employment needs -if the athlete wants to continue into higher education please go to the next page.

Q1: If you're not continuing in education what is important to you when deciding where to base yourself?

- This might include available jobs, types of employment (desk based/manual), salary, working hours, flexibility, location, long term career aspirations, triathlon coach, training centre, group or club, coach, training partners, training environment, social life.

SQ: To better answer the question you might want to consider the following;

Are any of these factors are more or less important to you than others?

- e.g. what is the balance for you between employment and triathlon? Is it 50/50 or 75/25 or 25/75, etc.

What type of employment would suit you/would you enjoy most?

How much income do you need to live off?

How important is the potential job vs where you would like to be based?

If training is important to you how flexible do you need a potential job to be?

The impact your location might have on future career and/or triathlon aspirations?



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3. EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT NEEDS This section has 1 main question

This question looks to establish where an athlete might look to base themselves dependent on higher education needs - please go to the previous page if you intend to stop studying and get a job

Q1: If you intend to study what is important to you when deciding where to go?

- This might include subject preference, available courses, entry grades, course size and hours, ability to defer or split years, long term career aspirations, city/rural/campus location, triathlon centre/group/club, training partners/schedule and environment, academic/sports scholarship, social life, etc.

SQ: To better answer the question you might want to consider the following;

Are any of these factors are more or less important to you than others?

- e.g. what is the balance for you between academics and triathlon? Is it 50/50 or 75/25 or 25/75, etc.

What if any financial constraints are you under?

- Will you need part time work? if so how will this impact training and study?.

What (if any) are the course expectations?

- Some universities will expect all students to study towards a 2:1 grade- this might create additional expectations/pressure and mean the training/academic balance becomes more difficult.

Are reduced offers available and if so would you be eligible?

Are you considering a gap year?

- How might this impact academics/finances/training?

Who/what can support you with all/any of the above?

- e.g. School tutor, School Careers Officer, UCAS Support, parents/guardians, Coach, Uni Websites, Uni Open Days, Uni Staff, etc.



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4. TRIATHLON NEEDS This section has 3 main questions

Defining what an athlete needs from a training programme, facilities and environment perspective.

Q1: What does your current training programme look like?

Considering the following may help answer the question;

What do you really enjoy?

What do you want to do more/less of?

What do you need to do more/less of?

What needs to change?

What needs to stay the same ?

- Athletes might want to consider the following: weekly volume, programme intensity, discipline (swim/bike/run) balance, technical/skills focus, use/or not of training aids and data (e.g. garmin/heart rate), training with others or alone, the relationship with your coach, the number of coached/uncoached sessions you do

SQ: Who might you need help from in understanding this?

- e.g. would it help to discuss some of the above with a coach?



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4. TRIATHLON NEEDS This section has 3 main questions

Defining what an athlete needs from a training programme, facilities and environment perspective.

Q2: What might the ideal facilities and physical environment look like?

Considering the following may help answer the question;

What is important that you already have?

What/where do you enjoy training at the moment?

What needs to change?

What needs to stay the same?

- Some considerations could be: flat/hilly riding, quiet roads (and time to get there), chain gang, single sex bike group e.g. if female would you prefer to ride with other females? Flat/hilly running, off road running, a track (and time to get there), long (50m) or short (25m) course and open water swimming (and time to get there).

Q3: Who would be in your ideal training environment?

- If you are potentially leaving home consider the impact your parents or significant others currently have in supporting you and how this might change. Can you fill the gaps yourself or not - are you ready to do this? If not who will do it for you? Or what do you need to learn before you leave home?

SQ: Team Me - who is in it currently and what do they do for you?

- Who supports you at the moment? Is this something you will need to replicate should you move away from home or not? Is a lot of support something you need? If yes - what do you need to do about it?