



VIS ATHLETE TRANSITION GUIDELINES

Supporting Athlete Transitions at
All Stages of the VIS Scholarship Lifecycle

Summary – July 2026





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose3

2. Background4

3. Guidelines5

4. Athlete Transition6

5. Off Scholarship Transition Support8

6. PL for Life.....10

Resources11

1. PURPOSE

All VIS athletes will experience transitions. Specifically, all VIS athletes will transition into, within, and from the VIS, within and beyond the realms of their sport. These guidelines provide:

- › Direction on how the VIS will support and empower VIS athletes to experience successful transitions throughout their sporting and life journey, characterised by sustained wellbeing and a growing sense of mastery over change events¹⁻⁴.
- › Detail on the athlete-focussed support available to VIS athletes through VIS Performance Health and Performance services to facilitate their transition experiences.
- › Direction for VIS Performance & Performance Health staff to ensure that VIS athletes have access to their expertise during transition processes.
- › Align with, and operationalise, the 2032 HP Win Well Strategy through guidelines for sustainable athlete wellbeing and performance.





2. BACKGROUND

The VIS motto is Empowering athletes to succeed in Sport and Life, and all Performance & Performance Health services work together to make this motto a reality for the athletes. The Performance Team supports the wellbeing of the athletes and facilitate their personal and dual career growth within a holistic framework throughout their sporting journey and beyond.

Transition is a process, not an event and is not linear; it requires coordinated Performance Team support

- › Athletes will experience a range of expected and unexpected transitions throughout their time at VIS.
- › Support must extend **before, during, and after** the visible change point, recognising the broader period of disruption, adjustment, and re-authoring of identity.
- › Transitions across domains are interdependent; injury is never solely physical, deselection is never only performance-based, and retirement is never purely vocational.
- › Stepwise programming can support athletes to make meaning of their sporting experience, broaden identity beyond sport, and progressively regain control through planning, new routines, and emerging opportunities, normalising retirement as a forward-focused process that builds confidence in life beyond sport.

Transitions can be predictable, and still destabilising

- › Athletes experience normative, quasi-normative, and non-normative transitions across their careers.
- › Even expected transitions can involve identity threat, role confusion, emotional load, and resource pressure.
- › Predictability should not be mistaken for reduced impact; proactive support remains essential.

Coping resources shape transition outcomes

- › Outcomes depend less on the transition itself and more on the skills, supports, and narratives already in place.
- › Early and proactive investment in coping resources is critical, beginning from an athlete's entry into VIS.
- › Athletes that develop specific and personally relevant competencies during their time on scholarship are likely to experience a more positive transition.

Identity exploration and connection are central to successful transitions

- › Developing identities beyond sport supports wellbeing and adaptability across career stages.
- › Transitions are best supported through trusted relationships (relatedness), with clarity around who provides support and how. Wherever possible, athletes retain autonomy during transition, with the timing, intensity, and mode of support individualised rather than prescribed with fixed checkpoints.
- › Responsibility for transition support is shared across the system, inclusive of the athlete, and is not confined to a single role or function.

3. GUIDELINES

1

All VIS Scholarship holders are covered by these guidelines and supported through entry, during, and off scholarship transition phases.

2

Transition planning will be considered within normal VIS Sport Program/ Individual Scholarship Athlete Program Performance Support Team processes to determine the appropriate support and is a function of the roles of the Coach/ Program Manager, General Manager High Performance/Performance Co-ordinator, and the Performance Lifestyle Adviser.

3

Coaches/ Program Managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate transition plans and support are developed for athletes. They will lead the Off Scholarship Transition planning. The Performance Lifestyle Adviser can assist to facilitate VIS transition support with the relevant Performance & Performance Health staff.

4

Early and continued preparation for transitions will be a focus of athlete learning and development at the VIS.

Athletes are encouraged to continue to build competence relevant and specific to their transition needs, before, during and after the transition phase.

5

All VIS athletes have access to Performance Lifestyle throughout their time on VIS Scholarship and for life. Development of multiple identifies, a dual career and transferrable life and career skills, underpinned by autonomy, competence and relatedness, are part of the programs and support offered at the VIS. Access to Performance Lifestyle extends beyond the time on scholarship.

6

Specific off VIS scholarship transition support is provided to athletes

- 6.1 All athletes will be offered transition support at the end of their VIS Scholarship from Performance Health and Performance services to assist in navigating the next phase of their life; refer to [Section 5 – Off Scholarship Transition Support](#). This includes identification of athletic identity and if the transition out of elite sport was expected or unexpected. The VIS Athlete Wellbeing Mental Health Framework will be used to support athletes who are identified as having a higher risk transition (e.g., high athletic identity, and/or an unexpected transition).
- 6.2 For athletes going off VIS scholarship and continuing in their sport or transferring to another Sport, transition planning should also consider “handover” to the relevant SSO, Club or supporting organisation, where possible plans or communication should occur Coach to Coach, Provider to Provider, with the athlete’s approval for communication.

7

These guidelines are operationalised alongside the VIS Safeguarding Policy and the VIS Athlete Wellbeing and Mental Health Framework. For all athletes U18 transition processes follow Child Safety requirements.



4. ATHLETE TRANSITION

ENTRY – SCHOLARSHIP INDUCTION

All athletes will take part in an Induction (Welcome) process upon becoming a VIS athlete that includes:

- › Completion of all scholarship requirements, which includes familiarisation with VIS code of conduct, safety and integrity requirements, and processes that pertain to their athlete scholarship.
- › Undertaking screening and initial meetings with Performance and Performance Health service providers.
- › A VIS Induction session led by the GM High Performance and/or the Sport Program Head Coach/ Program Manager that will set the foundations of their scholarship period and outlines VIS services available to the athlete.
- › If athletes are relocating to Victoria/Melbourne to take up the VIS Scholarship, the **VIS Relocation Guide** can be accessed to support this process.

WITHIN SCHOLARSHIP – TRANSITIONING TO AND FROM NATIONAL PROGRAM

- › When a VIS scholarship holder transitions into or out of a National team or National Sporting Organisation (NSO) training program, handover will occur between VIS staff and the NSO or National Team staff.
- › The Coach/ Program Manager/ General Manager High Performance will work with the relevant NSO to outline a transition plan and communicate this to the relevant VIS Staff.
- › The VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser will work collaboratively with the NSO Athlete Wellbeing & Engagement Lead (in Sports that have this role) to support the transition of the athlete into and out of the National program. If there is no NSO Athlete Wellbeing & Engagement Lead, then the VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser will continue to provide PL support to the VIS athlete during the transition and their time in the National Program.
- › If the athlete is required to relocate to the National Program Training Centre, then relocation support will be provided by the VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser and the NSO Athlete Wellbeing & Engagement Lead in an aligned and collaborative manner. Many NSOs have Relocation/Welcome Handbooks for athletes that are entering their National Training Centre programs, and this should be referenced to guide transition processes and support.
- › When an athlete transitions into a National Program, they will, in most cases, remain on VIS Scholarship and have access to VIS Performance & Performance Health services as set by NSO and VIS on an individual athlete basis.

WITHIN SCHOLARSHIP – SPORT AND LIFE TRANSITIONS

- › There is a myriad of Sport and Life Transitions that can occur for athletes depending on their specific sport and life circumstances.
- › VIS athletes can access individualised athlete focused support via a VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser and other Performance Health services to assist them to navigate these transitions.

OFF SCHOLARSHIP – ATHLETE INITIATED

- › Athletes may withdraw from their scholarship at any time by informing their VIS Coach/ Program Manager of High Performance in writing. Where possible the athlete is encouraged to also have a verbal conversation with the Coach or General Manager High Performance for their Sport program or Individual Athlete Scholarship Program.
- › Athletes will be provided Off Scholarship Transition support as outlined in [Section 5 – Off Scholarship Transition Support](#).
- › An athlete-initiated off scholarship transition may occur, but is not limited to, when an athlete transitions out of elite sport, pursues their sport at a different level, or decides not pursue sport via a VIS Scholarship.



OFF SCHOLARSHIP – VIS/SPORT (NSO) INITIATED

VIS Athlete scholarships are usually 12 months in duration with athletes required to meet progression targets that are aligned with NSO/SSO requirements for National Categorisation. Decisions on National Categorisation are managed by NSO.

- › If a current VIS athlete is not offered a further VIS Scholarship, then a Transition off scholarship process will be followed. These athletes will be offered transition support. Refer to sections [Section 5 – Off Scholarship Transition Support](#).

Scholarships may be terminated by the VIS for the following reasons:

- › Athlete unable to meet required criteria for continued progression
- › Breaching scholarship terms and conditions
- › Code of conduct violations
- › Further details on Scholarship termination are outlined in the Athlete Scholarship agreement

Decisions will be based on selection guidelines and communicated to the athlete verbally and in writing by the VIS Performance Director in conjunction

with the VIS coach/VIS Program Manager and the VIS General Manager High Performance. The PL Adviser is to be informed and briefed on the timeline and communication plan for this prior. The athlete will be provided support via VIS Performance Lifestyle and VIS Performance Psychology and will be able to access Off Scholarship Transition support, as outlined in [Section 5 – Off Scholarship Transition Support](#).

If an athlete is to go off scholarship due to non-categorisation by NSO due to performance reasons, and they are currently undergoing a significant medical intervention (for example, but not limited to, recovering from ACL surgery/injury) or significant mental health intervention, then the VIS will determine on a case-by-case basis if further transition support is required for the athlete to assist with their recovery and return to health. This will be managed by the VIS Chief Medical Officer and VIS General Manager High Performance in conjunction with VIS Doctor/Physiotherapist/Performance Psychologist, VIS Coach, VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser and Director of Performance.

RETIREMENT – OFF SCHOLARSHIP TRANSITION

Retirement can be Athlete initiated or Sport initiated. Often it is a time of significant change for an athlete, both immediately and longer term, with a range of emotions and many decisions to be made.

Ideally planning for retirement would have occurred prior with support provided to navigate the choices and decisions regarding future direction and life requirements. Even with a plan in place and a path forward, the change in sense of identity and connection to a purpose and to a team/squad/sport is significant and requires a support network for each athlete that includes the athlete's family & friends, NSO/SSO and the VIS.

The VIS offers retiring athletes transition support from Performance Health & Performance services to assist in navigating the next phase of their life. Refer to [Section 5 Off Scholarship Transition Support](#) and [Section 6 Performance Lifestyle for Life](#).

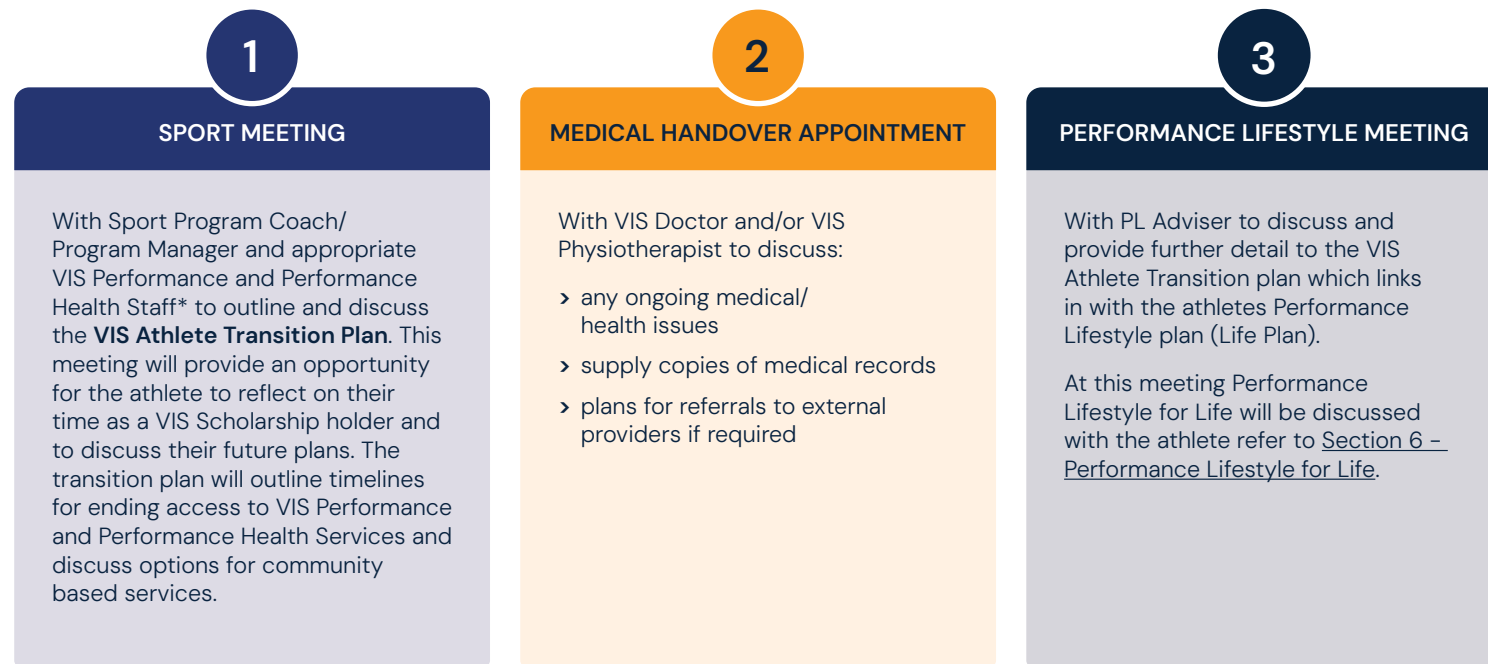
5. OFF SCHOLARSHIP TRANSITION SUPPORT

In VIS Sport Programs the Coaches/Program Managers with the support of the General Manager High Performance will outline **a transition plan and timeline** and communicate to athletes and VIS staff within the Sport Performance Team.

For the Individual Scholarship Athlete Program (IASP) the General Manager High Performance with the Performance Co-ordinator(s) will outline the transition plan and timeline and communicate this to athletes and VIS staff within the IASP. Consideration given to the communication with athlete coaches and external support that are non-VIS.

Support for VIS athletes during the off scholarship transition phase is facilitated by the Performance Lifestyle Adviser and may also involve VIS Performance & Performance Health services staff.

As part of the off scholarship transition process, athletes will have access to the following:



**Noting that consideration as to the most appropriate VIS staff to be in this meeting, such as Sport Program GM HP/Sport Program Performance Co-ordinator, Performance Lifestyle Adviser and other staff as required. Consideration also for NSO and/or SSA staff where appropriate. Sport Program Coach/Program Manager with input from VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser to consider who is involved in this meeting.*



Performance Lifestyle Advisers will recognise and respect athlete autonomy throughout the transition process, while also acknowledging the significant period of change. As such, Performance Lifestyle Advisers will proactively initiate contact to offer transition support where an athlete has not done so themselves, including making multiple attempts to arrange an off scholarship meeting for athletes leaving the VIS. Where an athlete chooses not to engage with this support, the Performance Lifestyle Adviser will document the non-engagement in AMS.

Once an athlete moves off VIS scholarship there is no further access to VIS Performance and Performance Health Services – other than Performance Lifestyle for Life. Noting that some Off Scholarship Athlete Transition meetings may occur post the end of scholarship date (for example Sport meeting with Coach/Program Manager, Medical Handover and/or PL Meeting).

Any exemptions to this for access to VIS Performance and Performance Health services (such as Sports Physiotherapy/Soft Tissue Therapy, Sports Medicine, Nutrition, Physical Preparation, Performance Psychology, Performance Science) during this transition phase will be determined on an individual basis and with the approval of the Director of Performance Health and Director of Performance.

TRANSITION SUPPORT

Performance Lifestyle for Life

KEY ASPECTS OF PL for LIFE

VIS provides Performance Lifestyle for Life (PL for Life) for all athletes who have been on scholarship, whether this be one or multiple years on scholarship.



PL Contact



Access to VIS Performance Lifestyle Adviser during off scholarship transition phase and beyond in the future years.



First 12 Months



First 12 months PL for Life is athlete-focussed, and PL Adviser driven.



Post 12 Months



Post 12 months PL for Life is athlete-focussed, and athlete driven.

PL for LIFE PROVIDES VIS ATHLETES WITH SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS



**VIS ALUMNI
PROGRAM**
Connection to
VIS Alumni



AIS SERVICES
Connection to
AIS MHRN
AIS CPRN



RESOURCES

Resources to support Athlete Transition are on the VIS Learning Hub,
Which can be accessed via this link **VIS Learning Hub Login**.

If you are not yet signed up for the VIS Learning Hub see below.

**If you are not already registered for the VIS Learning Hub,
please register to access the resources.**



**Scan the QR code
and enter your
details to register**

You can also click here to register for the Learning Hub

If you need any assistance registering or accessing resources,
please contact **learninghub@vis.org.au**

