**Dual career in student-athletes with disabilities: a perspective through the ERASMUS + Para-Limits project**

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**SYNOPSIS**

This book is the result of thirty months of work on Erasmus+. In this work are collected strategies for improving the conditions of student-athletes with disabilities who seek to harmonize their sporting and academic careers without one reality suppose a prejudice on the other. Through the different chapters, the reader will be able to delve into the idiosyncrasies of the social inclusion of this population through their effective access to higher university education without renouncing a successful sports career.

**ISBN**

9788419786210

**FUNDING**

This book was supported by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme [number 622213-EPP-1-2020-1-ES-SPO-SCP].

**This book is being edited by Aula Magna Mc Graw Hill in open access format. The current version will be replaced by the final version as soon as it becomes available.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

CHAPTER 1. Introduction to the PARA-LIMITS project IPs de todas instituciones

CHAPTER 2. Dual Career of student-athletes UCAM

CHAPTER 3. University studies on people with disabilities Foro Italico

CHAPTER 4. Paralympic Sports and accesibility requirements ONCE + CPE

CHAPTER 5. Procedure for analysis and implementation of educational adaptations Viseu

CHAPTER 6. Barriers and benefits to dual careers in people with disabilities Limerick

CHAPTER 7. The role of stakeholders for the dual career of student athletes with disabilities UNEFS

CHAPTER 8. The end of a sporting life Collective Innovation

CHAPTER 9. Recommendations for the implementation of dual-career of disabled sportspersons EAS

CHAPTER 10. Outputs from Para-limits project UCAM

**CHAPTER 2**

**A conceptual approach to the Dual Career of student-athletes**

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**Abstract**

This chapter presents a review of the activities that have been carried out within the Dual Career of Student-Athletes with Disabilities as a Tool for Social Inclusion - Para-Limits - project. Firstly, a review of the scientific literature was carried out on the status of the dual career at the legislative level, good practices, access to Higher Education; review of barriers and obstacles; and characteristics of the expert support staff for athletes with disabilities in the different participating countries. After this, an exploratory phase was carried out where a questionnaire about barriers in the dual career was passed to 203 student-athletes with disabilities from different European countries. Different focus groups were also carried out with stakeholders related to adapted sport clubs; adapted sport federations; NGOs specialised in social inclusion of disabled people; and researchers in inclusive education. With all the information collected, a Good Practice Guide on social inclusion, adapted sport and dual career was designed, which aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders about the real needs and barriers faced by student-athletes with disabilities; and an innovative pilot course was designed and implemented for the training of expert mentors in dual career for student-athletes with disabilities, whose structure and module was based on the data collected in the experimental phase, making a comprehensive curriculum.

**Keywords:** Barriers; Course; Disability; Dual career; Sport; Stakeholders; Student-Athlete.

**2. 1. Introduction**

In relation to the outputs generated from the project *Dual Career of Student-Athletes with Disabilities as a Tool for Social Inclusion / Para-Limits*, these were achieved through a holistic approach using both quantitative and qualitative techniques and through an international perspective made possible by the participation of all project partners. The development of the generation of the project products began with the literature review of the state of the art in each of the participating countries (desk-research). Thanks to this information, it was possible to select and/or develop the tools to be used in the next phase of the research (field-research) to analyze the situation specifically in Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Romania and Norway, thus being able to know the prevailing situation and the specific needs in each of the countries, in order to establish common lines of action.

In this regard, a literature review was first carried out. This review focused on collecting information about the legal framework for the dual career, including national, regional and local policies on adapted sport and social inclusion; good practices, both from public and private initiatives; general situation of high-level adapted sport at national level; situation of access of people with disabilities to Higher Education; review of existing barriers and obstacles for the dual career of the athlete/student with disabilities; competences for the sport mentoring of people with disabilities; and characteristics of expert support staff for the athlete with disabilities.

Following this, an exploratory phase was carried out in order to detect the needs and barriers that student-athletes with disabilities had in achieving success in both their academic and sporting careers. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed based on previous published questionnaires. More specifically, the "Perceptions of dual career student-athletes" (ESTPORT) questionnaire (Sánchez-Pato et al. 2016), the Exercise Benefits/Barriers Scale (EBBS) (Sechrist, Walker, and Pender 1987) and the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) (Visek et al. 2008) were used for data collection. These questionnaires were completed by a total of 203 student-athletes with disabilities from European countries. The second activity was to conduct five focus groups in different European countries. These were carried out with between six and eight people belonging to: adapted sport clubs; adapted sport federations; NGOs specialized in social inclusion of disabled people; and researchers in inclusive education.

Based on the results on barriers perceived by student-athletes with disabilities and on the conclusions of the focus groups conducted with disabled sport-related stakeholders, it was possible to detect the main problems to be solved in order to optimize the success of the dual career and the topics on which professors and coaches need training in order to help student-athletes with disabilities.

Thus, a Good Practice Guide on social inclusion, adapted sport and dual careers was produced, which aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders about the real needs and barriers faced by student-athletes with disabilities, inspiring them to take positive action to promote the creation of a dual career support network for athletes with disabilities.

Subsequently, an innovative pilot course for the training of dual career expert mentors for student-athletes with disabilities was designed and implemented, whose structure and module was based on the data collected in the pilot phase, realizing a comprehensive curriculum.

The importance of the training course presented below is based on the absence of a training course of this type that is open, accessible and adaptable to the needs of potential participants, both in terms of the time available to carry it out, as well as the contents of interest in which they consider they should go into more depth, and from where it can be carried out. In addition, the extensive analysis carried out at European level, allows the transfer of good practices between countries of the European Union and training in common policies that promote the mobility of students and professors..

**2. 2. General structure of the course**

The literature review in each of the participating countries, as well as the fieldwork (questionnaires and focus groups) during this project, allowed the development of an online training course aimed at university professors to become expert guides (mentors) for student-athletes with disabilities.

The training course is made up of six different modules, with the following general structure and subject matter:

* **MODULE 1**: Dual-Career for Student-Athletes with a Disability. Stakeholder Identification and Relationship and Support Network Development.
* **MODULE 2**: Introduction to the Dual Career of Student-Athletes.
* **MODULE 3**: Disability, Disability Categories and Sports Categories.
* **MODULE 4**: Individual Inclusion, Mentoring and Single Needs.
* **MODULE 5**: Environmental Inclusion. Creation of Suitable Environments and Procedural Adaptations on the Campuses. Identification and Removal of Physical Barriers.
* **MODULE 6**: Social Inclusion. Good Practices for the Integration of the Student-Athletes with a Disability in the University Community.

Each module lasts approximately 60-90 minutes and includes a variety of learning activities, such as participating in presentations, completing related assignments, and reading and reviewing relevant research papers and policy documents. At the end of each module, five multiple-choice questions related to the content of the module must be answered before moving on to the next module.

Concerning the learning objectives of the course, they are as follows:

* To enhance mentors’ appreciation and understanding of the dual-career of student-athletes and their ability to effectively support the dual-career of student-athletes with a disability.
* To develop the mentors’ ability to develop effective relationships with key stakeholders engaged in the dual-career of student-athletes with a disability.
* To enhance mentors’ ability to identify the needs of student-athletes with a disability regarding the optimisation of their dual-career and to develop the mentors’ communication strategies with these student-athletes.
* To enhance mentors’ appreciation of disability, disability categories and disability sporting classifications.
* To develop mentors’ ability to identify and remove the challenges and barriers faced by student-athletes with a disability.
* To develop the mentors’ ability to support the social inclusion of student-athletes with a disability into the university community.

With regard to educational methods and techniques, this online course is based on self-paced learning, being able to adapt to the needs of each participant and having additional materials available to be able to go deeper into the issues they consider of interest. Similarly, in order to create meaningful learning, problem solving and interactive learning activities are included.

In order to participate in the course, there are no prerequisites for participants, except for registration. If all the modules of the course are passed, the platform will issue a certificate of completion to the participant, detailing the details of both the course and the student.

**2. 3. Introduction to the training course modules**

The following is a brief introduction to each of the modules that make up this course, together with the learning objectives pursued.

*2.3.1. MODULE 1 - Dual-Career for Student-Athletes with a Disability. Stakeholder Identification and Relationship and Support Network Development*

This module introduces the training course in general in order to improve the understanding and organisation of the participants of the training course. It then describes the stakeholders in the dual career of student-athletes with disabilities. Finally, guidance is provided on how to develop an effective relationship with these stakeholders and the creation of support networks for student-athletes with disabilities.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To develop the mentors understanding of who the key stakeholders are in the development of the dual-career for student-athletes with a disability.
* To enhance the mentors’ ability to build effective relationships with key stakeholders.
* To develop the mentors’ ability to identify and devise a support network for student-athletes with a disability.
* To enhance the mentors’ appreciation of the role that universities can play regarding the development of effective support networks for student-athletes with a disability.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Review of case studies.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*2.3.2. MODULE 2 - Introduction to the Dual Career of Student-Athletes.*

This module provides an introduction to the concept of dual careers for student-athletes and the state of the art internationally. It also analyses the main benefits and barriers to its development, as well as the characteristics of the different models implemented in the past, the main actors involved and their role, and future trends. Finally, the potential of dual careers in high-level disabled athletes is discussed.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To understand the concept and main characteristics of the dual career of student-athletes.
* To know the main benefits and barriers for the development of the dual career of student-athletes.
* To learn about the main models and the stakeholders involved.
* To understand the potential of dual career in high-level disabled athletes.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.
* Additional readings (optional).

*2.3.3. MODULE 3: Disability, Disability Categories and Sports categories.*

In this module the purpose is to raise awareness of rights related to disability, disability categories and sporting classifications, providing legal documents from [official bodies](https://www.linguee.es/ingles-espanol/traduccion/official+bodies.html) that support this information.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To develop mentors' understanding of the environment surrounding persons with disabilities with respect to the legal framework and their rights.
* To improve mentors' ability to know what needs student-athletes may have based on their type of disability.
* To develop a minimum knowledge in the mentors so that they have the ability to know about the sports that an athlete with a disability can practice.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Review of case studies.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*2.3.4. MODULE 4: Individual Inclusion, Mentoring and Single Needs.*

In this module, the focus will range from identifying the individual needs of the student-athlete with a disability to individual inclusion, looking at biopsychosocial categories and crossing with domain objectives to prepare the mentor for tasks that facilitate inclusion and empower the athlete in the academic environment.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To develop the mentor’s understanding of single inclusion on the basis of a biopsychosocial model.
* To develop and identify the mentoring process principles (applicable to mentor’s institution).
* To develop the identification of single needs of the student-athlete on different areas.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*2.3.5. MODULE 5: Environmental Inclusion. Creation of Suitable Environments and Procedural Adaptations on the Campuses. Identification and Removal of Physical Barriers.*

This module introduces the concepts of environmental inclusion, physical barriers to overcome in universities and sports environments, as well as sports equipment adapted for disabled participants.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* Define and use correctly all the key terms
* Describe the different types of physical barriers that affect student athletes with disabilities
* Identify and apply different internal procedures for achieving environmental inclusion
* Describe accessibility principles
* Have specific knowledge about adapted sport equipment for facilitating sport practice

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*2.3.6. MODULE 6: Social Inclusion. Good Practices for the Integration of the Student-Athletes with a Disability in the University Community.*

This module provides the mentor with some useful strategies to promote the social integration of the student-athlete with a disability in the university community. It describes some good practices and illustrates a guide to which the mentor can refer to analyse the case and the university context.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* Understand the importance of facilitating the student with disabilities to successfully be integrated into the university community.
* Map the activities through which students interact with each other and with members of the university community (context analysis).
* Identify which activities are most suitable for the student-athlete with disabilities to integrate into the university community, based on his/her specific needs (case analysis).
* Being aware of good practices to facilitate social integration in the university community.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Writing activity.
* Quiz.

**2.4. Conclusions**

* In this project, a systematic literature review was conducted on the status of dual careers and institutional support for student athletes with disabilities in different countries.
* An exploratory baseline was carried out consisting of questionnaires to student-athletes with disabilities and focus groups with steakholders to find out their perception of barriers to the success of the dual career of student-athletes with disabilities.
* In view of the needs of student-athletes with disabilities, a Good Practice Guide on social inclusion, adapted sport and dual career and an innovative pilot course for the training of expert mentors in dual career for student-athletes with disabilities were designed.

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**CHAPTER 10**

**Outputs from Dual Career of Student-Athletes with Disabilities as a Tool for Social Inclusion - Para-Limits - project**

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**Abstract**

This chapter presents a review of the activities that have been carried out within the Dual Career of Student-Athletes with Disabilities as a Tool for Social Inclusion - Para-Limits - project. Firstly, a review of the scientific literature was carried out on the status of the dual career at the legislative level, good practices, access to Higher Education; review of barriers and obstacles; and characteristics of the expert support staff for athletes with disabilities in the different participating countries. After this, an exploratory phase was carried out where a questionnaire about barriers in the dual career was passed to 203 student-athletes with disabilities from different European countries. Different focus groups were also carried out with stakeholders related to adapted sport clubs; adapted sport federations; NGOs specialised in social inclusion of disabled people; and researchers in inclusive education. With all the information collected, a Good Practice Guide on social inclusion, adapted sport and dual career was designed, which aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders about the real needs and barriers faced by student-athletes with disabilities; and an innovative pilot course was designed and implemented for the training of expert mentors in dual career for student-athletes with disabilities, whose structure and module was based on the data collected in the experimental phase, making a comprehensive curriculum.

**Keywords:** Barriers; Course; Disability; Dual career; Sport; Stakeholders; Student-Athlete.

**10. 1. Introduction**

In relation to the outputs generated from the project *Dual Career of Student-Athletes with Disabilities as a Tool for Social Inclusion / Para-Limits*, these were achieved through a holistic approach using both quantitative and qualitative techniques and through an international perspective made possible by the participation of all project partners. The development of the generation of the project products began with the literature review of the state of the art in each of the participating countries (desk-research). Thanks to this information, it was possible to select and/or develop the tools to be used in the next phase of the research (field-research) to analyze the situation specifically in Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Romania and Norway, thus being able to know the prevailing situation and the specific needs in each of the countries, in order to establish common lines of action.

In this regard, a literature review was first carried out. This review focused on collecting information about the legal framework for the dual career, including national, regional and local policies on adapted sport and social inclusion; good practices, both from public and private initiatives; general situation of high-level adapted sport at national level; situation of access of people with disabilities to Higher Education; review of existing barriers and obstacles for the dual career of the athlete/student with disabilities; competences for the sport mentoring of people with disabilities; and characteristics of expert support staff for the athlete with disabilities.

Following this, an exploratory phase was carried out in order to detect the needs and barriers that student-athletes with disabilities had in achieving success in both their academic and sporting careers. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed based on previous published questionnaires. More specifically, the "Perceptions of dual career student-athletes" (ESTPORT) questionnaire (Sánchez-Pato et al. 2016), the Exercise Benefits/Barriers Scale (EBBS) (Sechrist, Walker, and Pender 1987) and the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) (Visek et al. 2008) were used for data collection. These questionnaires were completed by a total of 203 student-athletes with disabilities from European countries. The second activity was to conduct five focus groups in different European countries. These were carried out with between six and eight people belonging to: adapted sport clubs; adapted sport federations; NGOs specialized in social inclusion of disabled people; and researchers in inclusive education.

Based on the results on barriers perceived by student-athletes with disabilities and on the conclusions of the focus groups conducted with disabled sport-related stakeholders, it was possible to detect the main problems to be solved in order to optimize the success of the dual career and the topics on which professors and coaches need training in order to help student-athletes with disabilities.

Thus, a Good Practice Guide on social inclusion, adapted sport and dual careers was produced, which aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders about the real needs and barriers faced by student-athletes with disabilities, inspiring them to take positive action to promote the creation of a dual career support network for athletes with disabilities.

Subsequently, an innovative pilot course for the training of dual career expert mentors for student-athletes with disabilities was designed and implemented, whose structure and module was based on the data collected in the pilot phase, realizing a comprehensive curriculum.

The importance of the training course presented below is based on the absence of a training course of this type that is open, accessible and adaptable to the needs of potential participants, both in terms of the time available to carry it out, as well as the contents of interest in which they consider they should go into more depth, and from where it can be carried out. In addition, the extensive analysis carried out at European level, allows the transfer of good practices between countries of the European Union and training in common policies that promote the mobility of students and professors.

**10. 2. General structure of the course**

The literature review in each of the participating countries, as well as the fieldwork (questionnaires and focus groups) during this project, allowed the development of an online training course aimed at university professors to become expert guides (mentors) for student-athletes with disabilities.

The training course is made up of six different modules, with the following general structure and subject matter:

* **MODULE 1**: Dual-Career for Student-Athletes with a Disability. Stakeholder Identification and Relationship and Support Network Development.
* **MODULE 2**: Introduction to the Dual Career of Student-Athletes.
* **MODULE 3**: Disability, Disability Categories and Sports Categories.
* **MODULE 4**: Individual Inclusion, Mentoring and Single Needs.
* **MODULE 5**: Environmental Inclusion. Creation of Suitable Environments and Procedural Adaptations on the Campuses. Identification and Removal of Physical Barriers.
* **MODULE 6**: Social Inclusion. Good Practices for the Integration of the Student-Athletes with a Disability in the University Community.

Each module lasts approximately 60-90 minutes and includes a variety of learning activities, such as participating in presentations, completing related assignments, and reading and reviewing relevant research papers and policy documents. At the end of each module, five multiple-choice questions related to the content of the module must be answered before moving on to the next module.

Concerning the learning objectives of the course, they are as follows:

* To enhance mentors’ appreciation and understanding of the dual-career of student-athletes and their ability to effectively support the dual-career of student-athletes with a disability.
* To develop the mentors’ ability to develop effective relationships with key stakeholders engaged in the dual-career of student-athletes with a disability.
* To enhance mentors’ ability to identify the needs of student-athletes with a disability regarding the optimisation of their dual-career and to develop the mentors’ communication strategies with these student-athletes.
* To enhance mentors’ appreciation of disability, disability categories and disability sporting classifications.
* To develop mentors’ ability to identify and remove the challenges and barriers faced by student-athletes with a disability.
* To develop the mentors’ ability to support the social inclusion of student-athletes with a disability into the university community.

With regard to educational methods and techniques, this online course is based on self-paced learning, being able to adapt to the needs of each participant and having additional materials available to be able to go deeper into the issues they consider of interest. Similarly, in order to create meaningful learning, problem solving and interactive learning activities are included.

In order to participate in the course, there are no prerequisites for participants, except for registration. If all the modules of the course are passed, the platform will issue a certificate of completion to the participant, detailing the details of both the course and the student.

**10. 3. Introduction to the training course modules**

The following is a brief introduction to each of the modules that make up this course, together with the learning objectives pursued.

*10.3.1. MODULE 1 - Dual-Career for Student-Athletes with a Disability. Stakeholder Identification and Relationship and Support Network Development*

This module introduces the training course in general in order to improve the understanding and organisation of the participants of the training course. It then describes the stakeholders in the dual career of student-athletes with disabilities. Finally, guidance is provided on how to develop an effective relationship with these stakeholders and the creation of support networks for student-athletes with disabilities.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To develop the mentors understanding of who the key stakeholders are in the development of the dual-career for student-athletes with a disability.
* To enhance the mentors’ ability to build effective relationships with key stakeholders.
* To develop the mentors’ ability to identify and devise a support network for student-athletes with a disability.
* To enhance the mentors’ appreciation of the role that universities can play regarding the development of effective support networks for student-athletes with a disability.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Review of case studies.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*10.3.2. MODULE 2 - Introduction to the Dual Career of Student-Athletes.*

This module provides an introduction to the concept of dual careers for student-athletes and the state of the art internationally. It also analyses the main benefits and barriers to its development, as well as the characteristics of the different models implemented in the past, the main actors involved and their role, and future trends. Finally, the potential of dual careers in high-level disabled athletes is discussed.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To understand the concept and main characteristics of the dual career of student-athletes.
* To know the main benefits and barriers for the development of the dual career of student-athletes.
* To learn about the main models and the stakeholders involved.
* To understand the potential of dual career in high-level disabled athletes.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.
* Additional readings (optional).

*10.3.3. MODULE 3: Disability, Disability Categories and Sports categories.*

In this module the purpose is to raise awareness of rights related to disability, disability categories and sporting classifications, providing legal documents from [official bodies](https://www.linguee.es/ingles-espanol/traduccion/official+bodies.html) that support this information.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To develop mentors' understanding of the environment surrounding persons with disabilities with respect to the legal framework and their rights.
* To improve mentors' ability to know what needs student-athletes may have based on their type of disability.
* To develop a minimum knowledge in the mentors so that they have the ability to know about the sports that an athlete with a disability can practice.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Review of case studies.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*10.3.4. MODULE 4: Individual Inclusion, Mentoring and Single Needs.*

In this module, the focus will range from identifying the individual needs of the student-athlete with a disability to individual inclusion, looking at biopsychosocial categories and crossing with domain objectives to prepare the mentor for tasks that facilitate inclusion and empower the athlete in the academic environment.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* To develop the mentor’s understanding of single inclusion on the basis of a biopsychosocial model.
* To develop and identify the mentoring process principles (applicable to mentor’s institution).
* To develop the identification of single needs of the student-athlete on different areas.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*10.3.5. MODULE 5: Environmental Inclusion. Creation of Suitable Environments and Procedural Adaptations on the Campuses. Identification and Removal of Physical Barriers.*

This module introduces the concepts of environmental inclusion, physical barriers to overcome in universities and sports environments, as well as sports equipment adapted for disabled participants.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* Define and use correctly all the key terms.
* Describe the different types of physical barriers that affect student athletes with disabilities.
* Identify and apply different internal procedures for achieving environmental inclusion.
* Describe accessibility principles.
* Have specific knowledge about adapted sport equipment for facilitating sport practice.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Completion of tasks.
* Quiz.

*10.3.6. MODULE 6: Social Inclusion. Good Practices for the Integration of the Student-Athletes with a Disability in the University Community.*

This module provides the mentor with some useful strategies to promote the social integration of the student-athlete with a disability in the university community. It describes some good practices and illustrates a guide to which the mentor can refer to analyse the case and the university context.

The intended learning outcomes of this module are as follows:

* Understand the importance of facilitating the student with disabilities to successfully be integrated into the university community.
* Map the activities through which students interact with each other and with members of the university community (context analysis).
* Identify which activities are most suitable for the student-athlete with disabilities to integrate into the university community, based on his/her specific needs (case analysis).
* Being aware of good practices to facilitate social integration in the university community.

In terms of learning activities, the following are carried out:

* Video lecture.
* Readings.
* Writing activity.
* Quiz.

**10.4. Conclusions**

* In this project, a systematic literature review was conducted on the status of dual careers and institutional support for student athletes with disabilities in different countries.
* An exploratory baseline was carried out consisting of questionnaires to student-athletes with disabilities and focus groups with steakholders to find out their perception of barriers to the success of the dual career of student-athletes with disabilities.
* In view of the needs of student-athletes with disabilities, a Good Practice Guide on social inclusion, adapted sport and dual career and an innovative pilot course for the training of expert mentors in dual career for student-athletes with disabilities were designed.

**10.5. References**

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