



Saskatchewan EXCEL Program - Intake Process **SSA REX & VWFC MLS Academy**

Player Centered Approach

The Saskatchewan EXCEL programs are designed to align with the Player Centered Approach. This approach places the participant's needs at the centre of focus, with the program's primary role being to develop the participant as an athlete and as a human being. This development is based on the player's individual needs and goals both on and off the field.

The Intake Process for an EXCEL program is an inherently stressful process for participants at an age where they are also managing many other demands in their lives. The SK EXCEL Intake Process is designed with consideration of those stressors and to make the process as comfortable as possible for the participant.

It is often difficult for a participant to put themselves forward for a position in a program such as this. The fear of rejection or not fitting in can negatively affect their performance. It is important that we have a simple process that allows the participant to compete comfortably to show their potential, on and off the field.

Decisions to join a full-time program are often much more complicated than just a yes or no, especially for those participants who may have to move schools or homes. By taking a Player Centered Approach, this process will help the participant make the decision that is right for their personal circumstances.

Our Player Centered Approach will also be evident throughout the participant's time with the program. This means that individualized consideration and care will be apparent in all decisions between a participant and the program. Participation in an EXCEL program is not looked at within the context of a week, a month or a year, but rather between now and the participant's graduation from the program.

EXCEL Program Squad Parameters

- Identified participants will be offered an invite to join the program but are not required to accept unless they are wanting to do so.
 - Upon receiving an offer to join, it is the participant's choice to join the program.
 - Participants that have declined an invitation will not be excluded from future identifications or intake selections
- The average squad composition will contain between 22 and 30 full-time players.
 - Players invited into an EXCEL program for Assessment during a Selection Period do not count towards the full-time numbers.
- All players will be within the U14 to U18 age groups of that season's Summer Season.
 - For example, a participant who is U14 in Summer 2020, would be considered U15 from September 2020 until July 2021.

Previous Season's EXCEL Participants

Once a participant accepts an invite into the program, they will remain as a part of the program until their graduation barring any unforeseen circumstances or behavioural issues. As per the Player Centered Approach, the participants will also have the choice to leave the program at the end of a Season (i.e., the end of the Summer or Winter Season) if the program is not meeting their needs.

Seasons

A season within the SK EXCEL program is a designated period of time within the year to split the program calendar into easier to manage parts. There will be 2 seasons within the program, split to align with Saskatchewan league seasons.

Indoor Season – September until March. This season will coincide with the indoor season in Saskatchewan.

Outdoor Season – April until July. This season will coincide with the outdoor season in Saskatchewan.

Intake Calendar & Dates

There will be 2 set time periods within the seasons (1 per season) for participants to be invited in for Assessment. So, although the identification process will be an on-going process all year round, Assessment Periods will only be able to occur in one of the two set times. Unless approved by the Member Organizations Technical Lead, participants will not be allowed to join the program full-time in the same season as their Assessment period. IE. A player completes their Assessment Period in January, they cannot join until April of the same year (the start of the Summer Season). This will allow time for the participants, their organizations, and the EXCEL program to be prepared for the transition of the participant.

Winter Season

- Identification and assessments will take place during the Outdoor Season to select participants for the start of the Indoor Season (i.e., Outdoor 2020-2021 for identification and assessment for Indoor 2021-2022).
- Winter Season Assessment Period Dates – **Between 15th of November and 15th of March**
- Winter Season Assessment Evaluation Meeting – **Between March 15th & April 1st**

Summer Season

- Identification and assessments will take place during the Indoor Season to select participants for the start of the Outdoor Season (i.e., Indoor 2021-2022 for identification and assessment for Indoor Outdoor 2021-2022).
- Summer Season Assessment Period Dates – **Between 1st of May and 10th of July**
- Summer Season Assessment Evaluation Meeting – **Between 15th of July and 1st of August**

Participant Identification

Participant Identification will be managed by EXCEL Manager and the program coaches by actively identifying participants across the province who are excelling in their organisation's environment. The identification process will take place in the participant's own club environment to allow for a truer reflection of their abilities and characteristics.

There are several different avenues that the EXCEL Manager and the program staff will use to identify participants. Some of those avenues are, but not limited to:

- Contact with the organization's Technical Lead.
- Attending organization training sessions for appropriate ages and levels.
- Watching leagues and tournaments (i.e., PSL or 9v9 Provincial Championship).
- Multi-Sport Games Programs – Saskatchewan Summer Games, Saskatchewan Winter Games, Western Canada Games, and Canada Summer Games

Participants may also contact the EXCEL manager via email, requesting the opportunity to be identified. Any requests must include:

- A recommendation form from their club Technical Lead (contact your organization's Technical Lead for this part of the process) Their name, date of birth, and a brief summary of the teams and leagues they have played in.
- Current academic grades.
- Their preferred position.
- A short paragraph on why they believe they should be considered for the REX program.

If players have access to any of the following, they should also include as part of their email (this is not mandatory):

- Highlight videos.
- Game tapes.
- Other recommendation letters.
- Any other information that may be relevant.

Assessment Period

The Assessment Period is the next step after Participant Identification. Assessment Periods are for both the Identified Participant and the EXCEL Manager and program staff. The period will give the participant an opportunity to assess the EXCEL environment themselves to be able to make an educated decision on whether to join and give the EXCEL staff the chance to assess the player within the environment. One of the goals of the Assessment Period is to have the player participate in the EXCEL environment so that they feel comfortable moving into the environment if they decide to do so.

Invitation to Attend an Assessment Period

The invitation to attend the Assessment Period will be sent electronically through email to the athlete and their parents or guardian. Included on the email will be their organisation's Technical Lead. The email will be used to set a date, time, and location (or online) for a meeting between the participant, their parent or guardian, and the EXCEL manager and their staff. The participant may also invite their organization's Technical lead.

The initial meeting will include discussions on, but not limited to:

- Expectations of program from both sides.
- Their EXCEL schedule which will be matched to fit, and not conflict, with their club schedule.
- The participant's start date.
- The length of time they will be invited to attend, including a minimum of 4 practices.
- Their uniform expectations. EXCEL kit will be provided.
- Any other relevant information.

We recognize the decision for an athlete who may have to move to Saskatoon to participate in EXCEL program is a big decision for the participant and their family. Therefore, an option will be available for players from outside of Saskatoon to participate in the program on a part-time for a limited time (no longer than 6 months) basis before considering a move. As every participant is different (different distances, different ages, etc.), the details of what a part-time program entails can be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the participant.

For some families, this decision may be a simple and easy decision to have their athlete move, however, being participant-centred, there is an alternative for families that may need a longer time to make an educated decision.

It is important for the participant to feel immersed in the program as much as possible (with their schedule being considered). Therefore, the final schedule will be decided with consultation with the participant to fit around their weekly schedule, while also incorporating as much of the EXCEL program as they feel comfortable with. There will be an expectation of consistency in the schedule, and an expectation that the participant will attend as frequently as possible but with the understanding that only may be one day a week.

The participant will also be invited to attend all EXCEL program events, with no pressure to attend, during their Assessment Period. These invites will be made with the understanding that their schedule comes first, and they may not be able to attend. The decision whether to attend or not will have no weight in the final decision to offer a position as a full-time participant.

A full EXCEL program kit will be provided to the participant before the beginning of their Assessment Period. The participant will be expected to wear the EXCEL program kit at all EXCEL events. This kit will then be returned at the end of the Assessment Period.

If a player is invited into the program full-time, and they accept the invite, a brand new kit will be provided by the EXCEL program, with the costs associated paid for by the participant.

There will be no maximum or minimum number of participants invited in for assessment. The only criteria that may be used to limit the number of invited players will be the availability of facilities and availability of coaches.

The EXCEL Manager has the right to turn down the request for any appropriate reason. Such reasons could be, but are not limited to:

- Poor behaviour or performance in the program previously
- Poor behaviour or performance within their club
- A full roster
- Participant in bad standing

Final Assessments

Upon completion of the Assessment Period, a meeting will be held with all participants who attended an Assessment Period approximately a month before the completion of the season. These meetings will all take place in a similar time frame (of approximately a week) no matter the time or duration of the Assessment Period.

- **Summer Intake Assessment Meetings**– March of each year
- **Winter Intake Assessment Meeting** – July of each year

The meeting will be attended by the participant, their parent or guardian, and the EXCEL manager and staff. The participant may also invite their organization's Technical lead. The meeting will be a two-sided discussion on the participant's experience in the program and the EXCEL staff's assessment of the player.

During the meeting, the EXCEL Manager will indicate if the participant will be invited to join program on a full-time basis. If the decision is taken that an invite will not be offered at this time, a full explanation will be given, along with a written player assessment, as well as a plan for tracking of the participant in the future. The participant will continue to be monitored by EXCEL staff in their home organization. If the decision is taken to invite the participant into the program full-time, the EXCEL manager will provide a full explanation, a written player assessment, and express the expectations of the player if they were to join. The participant will not be expected to give an answer in the meeting. They will be asked to discuss the opportunity with their family before providing an answer at a later date. Upon acceptance, further communication will be provided around joining the program.

If a participant decides to accept the invitation to join the program full time, it will be expected that the participant completes all club commitments prior to joining the EXCEL Program at the start of the following season. For example, participants who participate on a team in the Outdoor Season that qualify for club nationals, would not be expected to join the program until all club commitments are fulfilled and would then join the to EXCEL Program following club nationals.

Process updated October 14th, 2022