

Sask EXCEL Program **Intake Process**



SASKATCHEWAN
SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Player Centered Approach

The Sask 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 objectives 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 Sask EXCEL Intake Process is designed with consideration of those stressors and to make the process as comfortable as possible for the participant. In addition, 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.

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 the Sask 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.

Sask EXCEL 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.

Participant Ages

The participant's age will have a bearing on how their identification and potential invite is managed. This is important as we consider the Participant Centred Approach and how they are integrated or assessed.

For reference later on in this process, the following ages will be considered from the season of identification. IE. The age they would move into in September of that season.

U13 Age Band – Will not participate in an Intake Assessment. Instead, 2nd Years and physically & socially ready 1st years will be invited to the U13 EXCEL ID Camp at the end of the summer season.

U15 Age Band – Both 1st & 2nd years will be invited for Intake Assessment during the EXCEL Season.

U17 Age Band – 1st years and late developing, exceptional 2nd years will be invited for Intake Assessment during the EXCEL Season.

Intake Calendar & Dates

There will be three set time periods within the seasons for participants to be invited in for an Intake Assessment.

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 three set times below. These timelines have been created to align with Member Organisations team selections. It is possible for a player to be selected outside of these timeframes, if discussed and approved with the Member Organizations Technical Lead.

Winter Season – U15 & U17 Age Bands

- Identification and assessments will be on-going throughout all seasons to identify and monitor potential EXCEL players.
- Winter Season Assessment Period Dates – **Between 15th of November and 30th January**
- Winter Season Assessment Evaluation Meeting – **Between February 1st & February 15th**
- Winter Season Final Decisions – **No later than February 15th**

Summer Season - U15 & U17 Age Bands

- Identification and assessments will be on-going throughout all seasons to identify and monitor potential EXCEL players.
- Summer Season Assessment Period Dates – **Between 1st of March and 30th of June**
- Summer Season Assessment Evaluation Meeting – **Between 1st of July and 15th of July**
- Summer Season Final Decisions – **No later than July 15th**

Sask EXCEL ID Camp - U13 Age Band

- Identification and assessments will be on-going throughout all seasons to identify and monitor potential EXCEL players.
- EXCEL ID Camp Dates – **4 Days between 1st of July and 31st of July**
- EXCEL ID Camp Evaluation Meetings – **Between 1st of August and 15th of August**
- EXCEL ID Camp Final Decisions – **No later than August 15th**

Participant Identification

Participant Identification will be a group effort led by EXCEL Manager, the EXCEL program coaches and the Technical Leads of each Member Organisation. The objective of identification is to highlight players 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:

- In the Yearly Recommendation by Member Organisation's Technical Lead.
- A recommendation at any point by the Member Organisation's Lead
- EXCEL Staff attending Member Organization training sessions for appropriate ages and levels.
- EXCEL Staff scouting appropriate leagues and tournaments (i.e., PSL).
- Multi-Sport Games Programs – Saskatchewan Summer Games, Saskatchewan Winter Games, Western Canada Games, and Canada Summer Games

Member Organisation Recommendations

As the people who know the players best, or with access to the coaches who know the players, Technical Leads will be expected to submit a recommended players submission twice, throughout each summer. This relates to all PSL Member Organisations will be expected to recommend their high performing players to the EXCEL Manager for review and an update of the Sask EXCEL Depth Chart. This process will be initiated by the EXCEL Manager and will include timelines for completion.

- U13 players for the EXCEL ID Camp
 - Submission Request (from EXCEL Manager) – No later than June 15th
 - Player Recommendation Submission (from MO Technical Lead) – By June 30th
 - Minimum of 5 and maximum of 10 of the top performing players
- U15 & U17 Players for Intake Assessments
 - Submission Request (from EXCEL Manager) – By July 31st
 - Player Recommendation Submission (from MO Technical Lead) – By August 31st
 - Minimum of 2 and maximum of 4 of the top performing players

EXCEL Staff Scouting

In addition to the recommendations from club Technical Leads, EXCEL Staff will also be monitoring players from Member Organisations in any of the avenues mentioned above. If players are identified in this process, then an EXCEL Staff member will contact the Member Organisation's Technical Lead before the player is informed of their Identification.

Assessment Period – U15 & U17 Age Bands

The Assessment Period is the next step after Participant Identification for players in the U15 & U17 age bands. Assessment Periods are designed so that both the Identified Participant and the EXCEL program staff have a chance to assess one another. 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 also give the EXCEL staff the chance to assess the player within the environment.

Invitation to Attend an Assessment Period

The first step for an Assessment Period will begin with a 'Congratulations' email, along with an invitation to attend an EXCEL Program Introductory presentation. This presentation will explain what the EXCEL Program is, and how the Intake Process works. This will be followed within the two days of the presentation with a follow up email including the recording & next steps survey link.

- This email will be sent no later than September 30th and will include all Technical Leads.
- The presentation will be no later than October 31st and Technical Leads will be welcome to attend.

The second step will include the participant confirming their intention to take part in an EXCEL Assessment Period by completing the survey. This survey 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/or Program 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.

Assessment Period

From the initial meeting, dates and schedules will be set for the participant to attend all EXCEL program events. These schedules will be made with the understanding that their schedule comes first, and they have control of their time. The scheduling decisions will have no weight in the final decision to offer a position as a full-time participant.

The participant will then attend EXCEL practices as a full member of the squad and be incorporated into all aspects of the sessions as if they were in the program full-time.

In addition, 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.

Assessment Period Participant Numbers

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**– February 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. A full evaluation will be given, along with a written player assessment. If a player is unsuccessful, or turns down the invitation, they 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 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 EXCEL Program following club nationals.

EXCEL ID Camp – U13 Age Bands

The EXCEL ID Camp is an opportunity to bring in the best U13 players from across the province and expose them to the Sask EXCEL Program and potentially offer positions to the most talented players. The camp would be split into two camps, a male and female camp, and would be spread across 4 days, with 2 per gender.

Invitation to Attend the EXCEL ID Camp

Within the first week of July, all identified U13 players will be sent a 'Congratulations' email inviting them to attend the EXCEL ID Camp at the end of the month of July. This invite will include a registration link and information on the camp.

Players will have two weeks to register and confirm their attendance.

EXCEL ID Camp

The camp will last 2 days per gender, with at least 2 sessions, 2 presentations & 1 game across those two days. There will need to be a balance between time on field and what a young player can handle. Players will be split into 2 or 3 teams depending on numbers & work within those teams across the 2 days. The camp will then run as a miniature EXCEL Program to expose the players to the Game Model, program expectations and give them an education on what the program is for.

EXCEL ID Camp Participant Numbers

In its planned form, the minimum numbers for the camp will be expected to be 26 players, with a maximum of 45 per gender. However, if the number of registrants demands a smaller camp, than that will be considered, and a structure change can be made to make the camp appropriate.

Final Evaluations

Within 2 weeks of the completion of the camp, evaluation forms will be sent out to each player giving them information on their performance and EXCEL Staff opinions.

Players that have been identified as High-Performance by the EXCEL Staff, may be offered a full-time place in the EXCEL Program as of the fall of the same year. If this is the case, Member Organisation's Technical Leads will be informed beforehand, before an email invite into the program is sent electronically before August 31st.