

Rules Regarding Varsity Match Eligibility

Drafted and approved by the Joint Blues Committee of Oxford and Cambridge on 28 February 1983.

- Alteration approved on 13 November 1997 which came into force from 1 October 1998
- Reviewed 12 March 2001 to come into force 1 October 2001
- Additional review in May 2013 to come into force 1 October 2013
- A review in June 2014 took place to come into force 1 October 2014
- Further reviews in June 2019 and June 2020 took place, which were approved in June 2021 to come into force 1 October 2021

A resident bona fide student member of the University is eligible to compete in a Blues Status Oxford versus Cambridge sporting contest, subject to the stipulations that he or she is:

1. A fully registered member of both a College and of the University for the current year according to both College and University academic registers (see Note 1 below); and
2. Registered for, and actively studying for, a recognised degree, diploma or certificate of the University where matriculation for all members of said course is compulsory (see Note 2 below); and
3. In residence for the duration of the term outlined in the relevant statutes as appropriate for the degree being undertaken (see Note 3 below); and
4. Not already the holder of 8 Blues, having previously competed in 8 Blues status Varsity Matches in any one sport (including all Blues won in either Cambridge or Oxford); and
5. Has not already participated in a male or female Varsity Match for the same sport in the same academic year (see Note 4 below).

and either

6. Is an undergraduate, in which case his or her eligibility continues until 30 September in the year in which she or he completes her or his undergraduate course;

or

7. Is already the holder of a degree from a recognised University and is therefore reading for a further degree or for a diploma, certificate or higher degree of the University, in which case her or his eligibility is limited to five (5) postgraduate appearances. These five years need not be consecutive (see Note 5 below).

Notes

1. The academic register or equivalent must have the student status shown as 'active' for at the very minimum the full term in which the Varsity Match falls, notwithstanding all other eligibility requirements. On occasion it may be necessary for a student to intermit her or his studies. For the avoidance of doubt, students will be deemed 'inactive' (and so ineligible) from the point at which they leave College and/or formally cease to study. They will be 'active' (and so eligible) from the point at which they return to College and/or formally resume study.
2. For all other non-Blue status Oxford vs. Cambridge matches i.e. second team competitions, the current British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) eligibility criteria shall apply. This allows any current student on a recognised course of study within the University, irrespective of matriculation or number of years of previous participation, the right to participate.*
3. Responsibility for maintaining the spirit of Varsity sport lies with selecting Captains, who are reminded that athletes are expected to participate actively in the sport for which they may be

selected prior to the Varsity Match. This is particularly important for part-time students, for whom full-time undergraduate and postgraduate residency requirements do not apply. However, it is acknowledged that the definition of active participation will vary from sport to sport and the Joint Blues Committee will not assess such participation as part of an eligibility discussion.

4. From time to time, individuals may wish to participate in a Varsity Match on behalf of the gender with which they do not identify. This would normally be for sporting reasons (i.e. increased standard of competition). Where Captains are in agreement, and the governing body for the sport allows for such cases, then those individuals are eligible. However, if Captains are not in agreement then the Joint Blues Committee will make a ruling in advance of the Varsity Match. Moreover, individuals are not eligible to compete in both men's and women's Varsity Matches for the same sport within the same academic year.
5. The eligibility of a graduate student is limited until his or her results are published in the Reporter (Cambridge) or the Examination Schools (Oxford). However, should extra work be required after a viva to complete academic requirements, then Varsity eligibility is extended until these requirements have been met but shall not extend beyond the academic year in which the original viva takes place. As per Note 1, the academic register or equivalent must have the student status shown as 'active' for at the very minimum the full term in which the Varsity Match falls, notwithstanding all other eligibility requirements.
6. The Joint Blues Committee supports transgender and non-binary athletes participating in University sport on behalf of the gender with which they identify. However, it is crucial to ensure that competition is both fair and safe. As such, Captains likely to select transgender or non-binary athletes are requested to notify the Director of Sport in their University at the earliest possible stage (and no later than six weeks prior to the VM taking place). The final decision as to the eligibility of transgender and non-binary athletes will be made jointly by the Directors of Sport at the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford, prioritising inclusivity, safety and fair competition, as well as respecting the right of the individual athlete to remain anonymous. In making their ruling, the Directors of Sport will take into consideration the guidelines of the particular sport's governing body, any advice received from the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellors within each University regarding equality and diversity policies and the BUCS eligibility of the athlete concerned (if available).
7. Selecting Captains should exchange a list of all individuals in contention for Varsity Match selection no later than six weeks in advance of the Varsity Match. If Captains are not in agreement regarding the eligibility of an individual, the Joint Blues Committee will make a ruling in advance of the relevant Varsity Match in accordance with the agreed procedures. If a transgender or non-binary athlete is to be included on the list, the selecting Captain need only indicate the presence of such an athlete through use of an asterisk at the bottom of the list. From time to time, an athlete may need to be added to the list having not initially been in line for Varsity Match selection, which is permissible but should be done with urgency in order to ensure transparency and fairness.

* Currently, and uniquely, the Isis/Goldie and Orisis/Blondie crews (second teams) are eligible for Half Blues.

If you have any further queries, please contact any of these staff, who are all members of the 'Joint Blues Committee of Oxford and Cambridge Universities':

- Men's Blues Committee President
- Women's Blues Committee President
- Oxford University Sports Federation President
- Senior Member of OU Blues Committees

- Senior Members of CU Blues Committee