

Scottish Student Cross Country Championships – Distance Consultation

Background

In the build up to the 2019 Scottish Student Cross Country Championship, athletes from several member clubs voiced concern that men and women were not racing the same distance. Between January and March of 2020, members were invited to participate in a consultation with SS Cross Country Chair, Michael Rimicans, on race distances at future editions of the Scottish Student Cross Country Championships.

Consultation

Student Club opinions were received in a variety of methods such as via email to the main SS Cross Country email address or through personal message to Michael himself. Out of the 3 institutions which took part in the 2019 SS Cross Country Championships, 7 chose to engage in the consultation (54%) – see Appendix 1. Although a wide variety of opinions were held on specific race distances, all parties agreed that men and women should race over the same distance at future events. With regards to distance, some advocated for an approximate distance of 5km and others advocated for an approximate distance of 14km, but the majority of participants expressed a preference for a race distance between 8km and 10km.

In a later consultation with Professor Ron Morrison, President of Scottish Athletics, Professor Morrison explained the graded approach of the Scottish Athletics cross country season. It begins with shorter events around the 3 – 4 km distance in the early autumn, then events gradually increase in distance until the Scottish Athletics National Cross Country Championships held every February (see Appendix 2). It became clear that to give our student athletes the best chance of succeeding at both the Scottish Student Championship and Scottish Athletics events, it would be wise for the approximate distance of the SSS Cross Country Championship to mirror the approximate distance of Scottish Athletics at a similar time of year.

Outcome

With our championship normally taking place in November, we have chosen to align ourselves closely with the Scottish Athletics Districts Cross Country Championships (held in early December), by setting the approximate distance of future Scottish Student Sport Cross Country Men's and Women's Championship distances at 8km.

Whilst we appreciate that some of our student athletes are under 20 years of age and would be racing a shorter distance at the Scottish Athletics Districts Cross Country Championships, we feel that the 8km distance will offer our entire student body an appropriate test expected of the SSS Cross Country Championships. The distance will also be a similar distance to other competitions that our event will aid students training for the Scottish Athletics events and vice versa.

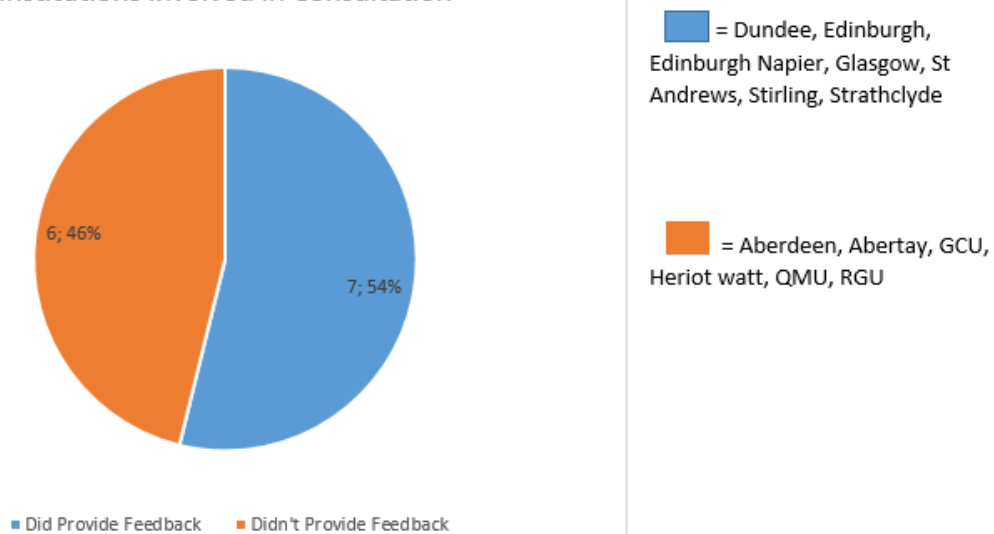
Please note that 8km distance is only an approximation and athletes may end up racing a slightly shorter or longer distance each year depending on what the course has to offer.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this consultation. We are delighted to be able to respond to our members' concerns by equalising the race distances and we look forward to this policy being implemented at the 2020 Scottish Student Cross Country Championships.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Institutional Responses from 2019 SS Cross Country Championships Entrants

Institutions involved in Consultation



Appendix 2. Cross Country Races in Scottish Athletics, SSS & BUCS Calendars and their Distances

Name of Event	Date of Event	Distance of Event
Scottish Athletics District Relay Championships	Early October	4km
Scottish Student Sport Cross Country Championships	Early-mid November	TBC
Scottish Athletics National Short Course Championships	Mid November	4km
Scottish Athletics District Cross Country Championships	Early December	8km
Scottish Athletics Inter Districts Cross Country Championships	Early January	8km
BUCS Cross Country Championships	Early February	10km
Scottish Athletics National Cross Country Championships	Mid-end February	10km