



ACADEMY DIRECTOR

San Diego FC is looking for an individual to lead our Right to Dream Academy in San Diego. Our first class of 18 boys arrive to our residential Academy in August 2025. Our mission is to develop high-character young men and women, to provide a top-class educational experience, and to develop their soccer talent to its fullest potential. In a few short years, we expect that several of our Academy graduates will be playing First Team football in the US or abroad, while others are matriculating at the nation's top boarding schools and colleges.

Our ideal Academy Director must have experience working in sports and education. The AD must be mission aligned with the organization and a cultural fit – a learner, always striving to be a good person, a problem solver, low ego. The AD must enjoy working with kids and must have both personnel and budget management experience.

The position is based at our Sharp Healthcare Performance Center in El Cajon, CA. While the Academy is fully residential, this position does not have to live on campus but should live nearby.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership & management

- Implement and evolve academy strategy as defined by Right to Dream
- Oversee daily operations and assist the team to develop clear structures, policies, and processes
- Recruit, develop, and manage leadership team of the Academy
- Maintain succession plans for leadership roles
- Create and implement performance evaluations and development plans for all academy staff
- Interface with parents, families of student athletes, recruits, and alumni and develop mechanisms for regular communication with all stakeholders
- Manage sponsorship and partnership relationships for the mutual well-being of SDFC and the Academy

Operational excellence

- Organize regular meetings to monitor deliverables and foster collaboration
- Coordinate academy schedules, incorporating teaching, enrichment, training, games, trips, and events
- Manage budgets, resources, and logistics

- Ensure compliance with DoS, MLS & FIFA regulations, Safe Sport, SDFC & RtD policies, WASC, DHS/SEVIS, and applicable California educational codes
- Coordinate with SDFC Sporting Director on player trading & contracting

Environment & culture

- Foster a psychologically safe environment focused on learning and development
- Create a collaborative culture integrating football, academics, and character development
- Promote open communication among students, families, coaches, and teachers
- Ensure academy engagement with the Right to Dream community
- Serve as a key decision-maker in high-escalation restorative and discipline matters with student-athletes and families

Student-athlete pathways – *integrate with pathway management at RTD*

- Overseeing the student athlete selection and scholarship process
- Oversee seamless transitions for student-athletes entering and exiting the academy
- Coordinate with coaches and teachers to implement holistic development plans
- Drive multi-disciplinary reviews to monitor progress
- Ensure all student-athletes graduate with a pathway in place

Community engagement – *align with community activity at SDFC*

- Act as spokesperson for the academy with local youth clubs and grassroots programs
- Establish opportunities to reward and recognize local youth coaches
- Collaborate with SDFC's community team on grassroots partnerships, programs & projects

QUALIFICATIONS

Successful candidates may meet requirements with a combination of the following experience and skills:

Education

- Bachelor's degree required
- Advanced degree (Masters' Degree or higher) in Education, Sports Management, Psychology, Student Affairs, or a related field strongly preferred.

Professional Experience

- Proven track record of success in youth development, education, or athlete support services, ideally with a residential component.
- Preferred backgrounds include:
 - Professional Sports Academies: Experience working in elite youth development environments

- Residential Schools: Experience in residential life leadership, student wellbeing, or athletic program direction in a private or boarding school setting
- Head of School Athletics or Student Life: Background as an Athletic Director, Dean of Students, or Director of Residential Life with deep experience managing teams, programming, and student development.
- Structured Youth Programs: Leadership in high-accountability youth programs (e.g., military academies, leadership camps) may also be applicable.

Preferred Experience

- Experience living or working in a residential education setting (e.g., dorm head, residence director).
- Prior involvement in elite athlete pathways or student-athlete academic and personal support services.
- Bilingual (Spanish) abilities are a plus.
- Knowledge of the San Diego area.
- Knowledge and experience working within the United States youth soccer landscape.

Skills & Competencies

- **Leadership & Team Management:** Strong skills to manage stakeholders in community and ability to lead multidisciplinary high performing School and Football staff.
- **Youth Development Expertise:** Deep understanding of the physical, emotional, and psychological development of high-performing adolescents.
- **Residential Life Management:** Familiarity with 24/7 residential programming, safety protocols, and crisis response; able to create a structured, nurturing environment.
- **Interpersonal & Communication Skills:** Excellent communicator with the ability to relate to players, parents, coaches, and external stakeholders with professionalism and empathy.
- **Cultural Competency:** Comfortable working with youth and families from diverse backgrounds, including international student-athletes.
- **Organizational & Program Design:** Ability to develop and implement policies, programs, and systems that support the holistic development of academy residents.
- **Compliance & Safeguarding:** Commitment to child safety laws, SafeSport, safeguarding policies, and applicable governing body or league regulations.
- **Technology & Reporting:** Competency in digital communication and data tools to track player development, wellbeing, and academic progress.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

Reporting

- Reports to SDFC's COO
- Directly manages Head of School and Head of Academy Football
- Oversees the Academy's Human Performance Lead (dotted line)

Relationships

- SDFC leadership team, First team, Marketing (media, communications, and brand) and Commercial departments
- Sharp Healthcare Performance Center Operations Team
- RtD Academy leaders in Denmark, Egypt & Ghana
- RtD Group Head of Talent & Pathways
- RtD Global Marketing Department
- Participate in RtD Talent Committee
- Engage with MLS Next leadership, US Soccer, Federación Mexicana de Fútbol
- Liaise with Academy Directors at MLS & Liga MX clubs and local youth soccer clubs

ABOUT SAN DIEGO FC:

Our **VISION** is to be the epicenter of football excellence and innovation in North America. Our **MISSION** is to create opportunities for talent to flourish and San Diego to shine. We value community, diversity, and acting with purpose. We are looking for a leader to co-create the culture of a new organization that is built on the premise that you can discover, understand, and re-define excellence by nurturing talent and creating opportunity anywhere – specifically though soccer. SDFC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Globally, Right to Dream partners with talented young people to give them a nurturing environment to flourish and thrive. We do this through a holistic model of athletic development, where young people grow as human beings and great footballers. RTD's promise is set out in their [Manifesto](#): a set of 8 commitments which is central to the San Diego FC ethos.

This is an opportunity to be a part of a great team building something meaningful for San Diego. We offer excellent benefits including health coverages with generous company contributions, over 30 days of paid time off, and a 4% company match on your 401(k).

Before applying, please read through our websites: Righttodream.com and Sandiegofc.com. Qualified and interested candidates may apply through our posting on [LinkedIn](#).

Salary: up to \$250,000 + bonus annually