

Part 11 - Financial Aid and Athletic Scholarship Policies

The goals of the athletic scholarship program at Fort Lewis College are to provide financial assistance to deserving student-athletes and to ensure that all awarding of such aid is consistent with the regulations of the NCAA and the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. The assumption in awarding athletic financial aid is that students who devote long hours in practice may, through a regulated program of assistance, be relieved of the obligation to work part-time to subsidize their collegiate education. Athletic scholarships are awarded only to those individuals who show exceptional athletic promise and aptitude to meet academic standards and maintain academic progress. The program's justification must provide the expectation that students will meet the College's academic standards while encouraging participation in an intercollegiate sport.

I. Definition and Maximum Value

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 1. A student-athlete receiving financial assistance other than that administered by the student-athlete's institution or from anyone upon whom the student-athlete is naturally and legally dependent is not eligible for intercollegiate competition, except for exceptions provided in NCAA Bylaw 15.
 2. Institutional financial aid includes scholarships, grants and loans.
 3. Institutional financial aid may not exceed the value of tuition and regular fees, room, board and course related books. A student athlete receiving a Pell Grant may receive that beyond the value of the allowable institutional financial aid.
 4. The tuition waiver portion of an athletic scholarship waives fees for a course load of 12 to 18 credit hours. Student athletes are financially responsible for courses registered beyond 18 credit hours. Some fees are refunded for dropped courses through the 15th day of the semester.

II. Eligibility

To be eligible for an athletic scholarship, a student-athlete must be eligible for intercollegiate competition by being in compliance each academic semester with the minimum NCAA grade point average, satisfactory progress requirements and full-time student status. (See Academic Eligibility Policies)

III. Terms and Duration

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 1. An Athletic Scholarship Contract defines the terms and duration of an athletic scholarship and the mutual responsibilities of Fort Lewis College and the student-athlete. A student-athlete assumes responsibilities to Fort Lewis College and to the particular sport for which the aid is granted when he/she signs a Athletic Scholarship Contract.

2. The athletic scholarship will be awarded on an annual basis, with one-half being disbursed each academic semester, provided the student-athlete meets all NCAA, conference and College requirements governing athletic financial aid. All scholarships are limited to one year in duration.

IV. Athletic Aid Termination

Institutional aid may not be reduced or cancelled during the period of its award for any of the following reasons (NCAA Bylaw 15.6.4.3):

1. On the basis of Student Athlete's (SA) ability or contribution to the team's success;
2. Because of an injury that prevents the recipient from participating in athletics; or
3. For any other athletic reason.

Institutional aid may be reduced or cancelled during the period of its award if the recipient (NCAA Bylaw 15.6.4.1):

1. Renders him/herself ineligible for intercollegiate competition;
2. Fraudulently misrepresents information on an application, or other documents;
3. Engages in serious misconduct warranting substantial disciplinary action;
4. Voluntarily withdraws from a sport.

V. Policy on Reduction or Non-Renewal of Athletic Aid

Athletic Aid is made for a specific time period not to exceed one academic year. No Athletic Aid is required to be renewed for an ensuing period, and no coach can promise a SA at the signing that his/her initial grant will be renewed, reduced or canceled for no more than one academic year. Reasons for consideration of reduction or non-renewal can range from attitude, discipline problems, unsatisfactory athletic performance, academic ineligibility or voluntary withdrawal.

1. **DECISION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COACH**: The primary responsibility for the evaluation of the SA and the decisions concerning continuation of the SA on the team (as well as recommendation for reduction or non-renewal of athletics aid) rests with the head coach of each sport. The determination of the methodology for such evaluations and judgments are clearly within the realm of professional competencies and responsibilities of the coach.
2. **NCAA AND INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS**: Reductions and non-renewals will be handled in accordance with NCAA regulations. The primary concern of the institution in these matters is that the SA is not treated in an arbitrary manner. This concern is addressed through a coach demonstrating open lines of communication concerning the decision for reduction or non-renewal with both the SA and the athletics administration. All decisions should be made in a timely manner, as the situation permits, to allow all parties alternative athletic or academic opportunity. An AWARD

DISCUSSION FORM, will be provided by the coach that will require both the Student Athletic and coach to sign acknowledging their communication.

3. ***HEARING OPPORTUNITY***: A SA, whose grant has been recommended for reduction or non-renewal, shall be afforded the opportunity for a hearing in accordance with NCAA rules.

VII. Financial Aid Appeals Hearing Procedure

A student may request a hearing after receiving notification of an athletic aid reduction or cancellation. An **ATHLETIC AID APPEAL FORM** can be obtained at the Office of Financial Aid. The student must submit a request, in writing, along with the appeal form to the Financial Aid Director. The request for appeal must be received within a reasonable time (14 calendar days) from initial notification of the reduction or non-renewal. A student failing to request a hearing within this time frame waives the right to appeal.

1. ***HEARING SCHEDULE***: The Director of Financial Aid or his/her designate will promptly schedule an appeals hearing after receiving the request. Within ten business days after receiving written notice of appeal, notification to all parties will be made including the date, time and location of the hearing. Notifications will be sent to Student Athlete, Director of Athletics, Associate Director of Athletics and all Financial Aid Review Committee members.
2. ***HEARING PANEL***: The Financial Aid Review Committee, comprised of non-athletic department staff member and chaired by the Vice President of Enrollment Management, will hear the appeal. The Associate Director of Athletics and/or Director of Athletics will be a nonvoting participant.
3. ***CLOSED HEARING***: The hearing will be closed to all but the participants and the student's requested observers.
4. ***HEARING PARTICIPANTS***: Hearing participants shall include the student who requested the hearing, Athletics Department presenters, Associate Director of Athletics (Compliance Officer), and any witnesses requested by either party.
5. ***HEARING PROCEDURES***: Each side will have the opportunity to present its case before the hearing panel, including testimony, evidence, etc. from any supporting witnesses. The names of the witnesses and their relevance must be given to the chair of the committee at least one day prior to the hearing. The number of witnesses the student athlete may have will be limited to two.
 1. Presentation Order: The Athletics Department will present its case first, followed by the appellant.
 2. Questioning Procedure: Neither side will be permitted to question the other. However, they may present and question witnesses. At the completion of the testimony, members of the committee may ask questions, and the student athlete may also ask questions but the questions must be directed through the chair of the committee.
 3. Panel Inquiries: The appeals panel shall be allowed to question all participants.
 4. The Compliance Officer or Athletic Director shall be available to answer questions from either side.

5. Panel of Witnesses: The Hearing Panel may call additional witnesses it feels necessary to render a judgment. Either party may question these witnesses.
6. The Chair of the Committee shall have the right to exclude evidence if determined to be irrelevant to the issue at hand.
6. **PANEL DECISION** : The Hearing Panel will make its decision in executive session and inform in writing, the Student Athlete, the Head Coach, the Athletic Director and the Associate Director of Athletics (Compliance Officer) within 5 business days of the close of the hearing. Included in the notice will be how the funding will be reduced and/or cancelled. The decision shall be final.

VIII. Procedures for Student-Athlete Transfer Release Denial Appeal

A current or former student-athlete who wishes to transfer to another institution must request that Fort Lewis College's Compliance officer grant them permission to contact another institution about the possibility of transferring. This does not include the use of the one-time-transfer waiver. This release must be in writing from the student athlete to the Compliance Coordinator. If permission is granted, the student athlete must give it to the inquiring institution before recruitment can begin. In the event that a head coach denies the student-athlete such a release, the following procedures will be followed:

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 1. The Athletic Director or designee will review the Head Coach's decision, discuss the case with the coach and, if agreement to release is reached, will approve the transfer release and forward the decision to the Compliance Coordinator. The Compliance Coordinator will then have the authority to send out a transfer release form(s) to institutions that request a transfer release for a student-athlete.
 2. If the Athletic Director or designee reviews the decision and decides that Fort Lewis College's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics will **not** grant a transfer release to the student-athlete, a letter shall be sent to the student-athlete within 14 days notifying him/her of a hearing opportunity. The student-athlete may, within 10 days, request this hearing opportunity. The institution shall conduct the hearing within 30 days of receiving the student athletes' request.
 3. The administrative review is conducted by the members of the Faculty Athletic Committee. This conference is informal with the coach presenting the rationale for the transfer release not being granted and the student-athlete presenting a response. A decision will be made within five days and will be forwarded to the student-athlete by the Athletic Director or designee. This committee makes the final decision per NCAA Bylaw {14.5.5.3.9.1}.