



NONRENEWAL OR REDUCTION OF ATHLETIC GRANT-IN-AID STIPEND THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Stakeholders

There are three entities involved in the following policy:

Scholarship Committee: The Scholarship Committee is responsible for the development of the following policy, and will ensure adherence to the following policy by all parties. The Committee shall comprise of the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR), Athletic Director, and Associate Athletic Director overseeing compliance.

Athletic Director: The Athletic Director of the athletic department shall serve as the first appeal of the cancellation/reduction of a student-athlete's grant-in-aid. The Athletic Director may assign this responsibility to a member of the senior staff at his/her discretion.

Scholarship Appeals Panel: The Scholarship Appeals Panel (SAP) shall be the final step in the appeals process, and has ultimate authority in the manner of cancellation/reduction of aid. The Scholarship Appeals Panel shall consist of the FAR (non-voting) and at least three members of Athletic Counsel.

Athletic Grant-In-Aid

Athletic grants-in-aid are awarded by The University of Southern Mississippi for a term of a designated length not to exceed one (1) academic year in accordance with regulations established by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA has issued specific guidelines describing the circumstances under which an athletic grant-in-aid can be canceled during the term of the award. The following paragraphs detail the policies established by The University of Southern Mississippi relating to the nonrenewal or reduction in size of an athletic grant-in-aid and the steps that a student-athlete may take to appeal changes in grant-in-aid status. These policies are established by The University of Southern Mississippi Scholarship Committee. Changes to the policy may be made at any time at the discretion of the Committee.

At the beginning of each academic year, all new team members should receive team rules relating to training, practice, and competition, including those that may affect grant-in-aid renewal. At the beginning of each academic year, the guidelines set forth in this document, which alert grant-in-aid recipients to the grant-in-aid appeal procedures, shall be discussed with the student-athletes with the opportunity provided to ask

questions.

Circumstances Warranting Nonrenewal or Reduction of an Athletic Grant-In-Aid at the Conclusion of the Term of Award

Reasons that a nonrenewal or reduction of a student-athlete's athletic grant-in-aid may be undertaken by the Athletic Department include, but are not limited to, the following actions of the student-athlete:

- (A) Rendering himself or herself academically ineligible for intercollegiate competition;
- (B) Fraudulently misrepresenting any information on an application, letter of intent or financial aid agreement;
- (C) Engages in misconduct warranting disciplinary penalty;
- (D) Voluntarily withdraws from a sport for personal reasons;
- (E) Violation of team rules, and/or training and practice regimen;
- (F) Failure to participate in athletic contest when called upon to do so by the coaching staff;
- (G) Engaging in activities at athletic training, practice, contest or other sites that are harmful to the student-athlete or to others;
- (H) Violations of standards of good sportsmanship;
- (I) Destruction or defacement of University property;
- (J) Conduct that violates University rules and regulations;
- (K) Conduct that violates NCAA or Conference USA rules; or
- (L) Deficiency in athletic performance or ability.

Procedures Governing Nonrenewal or Reduction of Athletic Grant-In-Aid at the Conclusion of the Period of the Award

- **Nonrenewal or Reduction Based on Items A-K:** To serve as grounds for nonrenewal or reduction of an athletic grant-in-aid, the circumstances listed above in items A-K must be documented by the coaching staff and/or another institutional staff member as they occur. Documentation shall include the name of the student-athlete and the date and circumstances of the infraction. The head coach must provide the student-athlete with notification (verbally or written) prior to the conclusion of the award or prior to the conclusion of the student-athlete's athletic season verifying that the student-athlete was made aware of the potential reduction or cancellation of athletic grant-in-aid for the subsequent academic year (or semester).
- **Nonrenewal or Reduction Based on Item L (Deficiency in Athletic Performance or Ability):** The decision to nonrenew or reduce an athletic grant-in-aid on the basis of item L, "deficiency in athletic performance or ability," shall be at the sole discretion of the student-athlete's head coach. The head coach must provide the student-athlete with notification (verbal or written) prior to the conclusion of the award or prior to the conclusion of the student-athlete's athletic season verifying that the student-athlete

was made aware of the potential reduction or cancellation of athletic grant-in-aid for the subsequent academic year (or semester). The head coach's decision may be based on his/her subjective opinion after adequate consideration of the student-athlete's performance and/or ability. Any appeal taken of a nonrenewal or reduction of athletic grant-in-aid for this reason shall be limited to procedural matters followed by the Athletic Department. The Athletic Director and Scholarship Appeals Panel shall not examine the sufficiency of the student-athlete's performance or ability and substitute its opinion for that of the head coach.

Circumstances Warranting Nonrenewal or Reduction of an Athletic Grant-In-Aid During the Term of Award

Reasons that a nonrenewal or reduction of a student-athlete's athletic grant-in-aid may be undertaken by the Athletic Department during the period of the award include the following actions of the student-athlete:

- (A) Rendering himself or herself academically ineligible for intercollegiate competition;
- (B) Fraudulently misrepresenting any information on an application, letter of intent or financial aid agreement;
- (C) Engages in serious misconduct warranting substantial disciplinary penalty (as determined by the university's regular student disciplinary authority); or
- (D) Voluntarily withdraws from a sport for personal reasons.

Procedures Governing Nonrenewal or Reduction of Athletic Grant-In-Aid During the Period of the Award

- **Nonrenewal or Reduction Based on Items A-D:** To serve as grounds for nonrenewal or reduction of an athletic grant-in-aid, the circumstances listed above in items A-D must be documented by the coaching staff and/or another institutional staff member as they occur. Documentation shall include the name of the student-athlete and the date and circumstances of the infraction(s). The head coach must provide the student-athlete with notification (verbally or written) of the cancellation of the award.

Student Appeal of Nonrenewal or Reduction of Athletic Grant-In-Aid to the Scholarship Appeals Panel

A student-athlete may appeal to the Athletic Department a decision by the head coach to not renew or to reduce the amount of an athletic grant-in-aid. Such an appeal must be initiated within ten (10) days of the head coach notifying the student of the change in grant-in-aid status. The desire to appeal must be communicated in writing to the Athletic Director or Associate Athletic Director overseeing compliance. After the head coach's decision, an appeal may be considered by the Athletic Director at his/her discretion. The Athletic Director may hear an appeal, rule without hearing from the coach or student-athlete, or defer to the SAP. If the Athletic Director upholds the decision of the coach, the appeal will be considered by the Scholarship Appeals Panel. It shall not be the responsibility of the Athletic Director or SAP to seek out

statements, evidence, or any other documentation pertinent to the decision. If called upon, the burden shall be upon the student and/or coach to prove his or her case by a preponderance of evidence.

Athletic Director

- The Athletic Director shall complete his/her review of a student's appeal of a grant-in-aid decision within a reasonable time frame, reporting the decision verbally or in writing to the involved student, coach, and the FAR.
- Procedures for reaching a decision shall be at the discretion of the Athletic Director.
- The Athletic Director may reach a decision without consultation with the student or the coach, or may simply defer to the authority of the SAP.

Scholarship Appeals Panel

- The SAP shall complete its review of a student's appeal of a grant-in-aid decision within a reasonable time frame, reporting the decision verbally or in writing to the involved student, coach and the Athletic Director. In addition to the FAR, at least three full-time faculty members must be present.
- Procedures for reaching a decision shall be at the discretion of the SAP.
- The SAP may reach a decision without consultation with the student or the coach. If statements are to be given from the involved parties, it will be in a manner at the discretion of the SAP.
- The SAP will reach a decision by a simple vote of those members present.
- The decision of the SAP shall be final.