



## ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES & INTERPRETATIONS FOR THE 2009-2010 NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT

**APPLICABLE NLI SPORTS:** An institution may only issue National Letters of Intent (NLI) to prospective student-athletes who will compete in sports listed in NCAA Bylaw 17 and/or NCAA Bylaw 20.

**THE BASIC RULE:** By signing an NLI and athletics financial aid agreement, a prospective student-athlete agrees to attend the signing institution for one academic year and receive a written offer of athletics financial aid for one academic year, provided the prospect meets all applicable university, conference and NCAA policies for receipt of financial aid.

**SATISFYING THE TERMS OF THE NLI:** A student may satisfy the terms of the NLI by attending the signing institution for at least one academic year as a full-time student, or by graduating from a junior college.

**THE BASIC PENALTY:** If a student-athlete does not attend the signing institution or attends that institution for less than one full academic year, and that student enrolls at another NLI institution, that student may not represent the second institution in intercollegiate athletics competition until he or she has completed one academic year in residence at the second NLI member institution. Additionally, the student will lose one season of competition in all sports.

**EARLY SIGNING PERIOD PENALTIES:** Prospective student-athletes who will participate in football are prohibited from signing an NLI during the early signing period. A student who signs an NLI during the early period in a sport other than football will be ineligible for practice and competition in the sport of football during the student's first year of enrollment at an NLI member institution, and shall forfeit one season of competition in the sport of football. In circumstances where a student's primary sport is not football, but the student anticipates participating in football, the student should delay signing an NLI until either the football signing period or during the regular signing period for all other sports.

**RELEASE FROM THE NLI OBLIGATION:** An institution may release a student from his or her NLI obligation by selecting the "Complete Release" option on the NLI Release Request Form before signing. The NLI release is not the same as NCAA permission to contact (i.e., releases are not specific to schools).

**RECRUITING BAN REMOVED:** By removing the NLI Recruiting Ban from this student, contact with coaches is permissible without granting a Complete Release.

**15 DAY DEADLINE:** The release request deadline for institutional response is 15 business days. Once the deadline expires with no response from the institution, the student will be released from the NLI agreement.

**REASON FOR RELEASE REQUEST AND DENYING RELEASE:** The student must state the reason for the release request and the institution must state the reason for denial on the release form.

**PROCESSING THE RELEASE REQUEST FORM:** The student submits the release request form to the signing institution's director of athletics and the NLI Office. The NLI Office notes the date of submission in order to track the 15 business day deadline. Once the institution sends the signed release request back to the student, a copy should also be sent to the NLI Office.

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**APPEALING A “NO RELEASE” DECISION:** When an institution does not release a student from his or her NLI obligation, the student may appeal the decision within 30 days of the institution’s “no release” by filing a petition with the NLI Policy & Review Committee or the Division II Review Committee. Petitioning students should submit an NLI Appeals Form, a copy of the Release Request Form and any supporting materials to the NLI office. Students are notified in writing regarding the Committee’s determination on their petition. The appeals process takes approximately 6-8 weeks. Release decisions of the Committee may be reviewed by the Division I or Division II NLI Appeals Committee, whose decisions are final and binding.

**Reminder:** All petitions by a student of an NLI Committee decision must be made within 30 days of the date on the decision letter sent from the NLI office.

**Reminder:** An institution does not have the right to appeal a decision of the NLI Policy & Review Committee or Division II Review Committee. Furthermore, as a condition of membership in the NLI program, participating institutions and conferences are precluded from bringing legal action against the National Letter of Intent program or the Collegiate Commissioners Association.

**NULL AND VOID LETTERS:** In addition to seeking a complete release, a student’s NLI may be declared null and void. While there are many circumstances noted in Provision 6 which may result in an NLI being declared null and void, the next four circumstances should be noted.

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:** If a prospective student-athlete is denied admission to the signing institution, the NLI shall be declared null and void. There must be documentation substantiating the denial of admission before an NLI is considered null and void. The institution must notify its conference office regarding the denial, and the student should be informed by the signing institution of the status of his or her admissions application prior to July 1.

Furthermore, it should be noted that a prospective student-athlete has an obligation to provide, upon request, a transcript of his or her previous academic record and an application for admission to the institution. The prospect also has an obligation to register with and provide information to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

**Statement of Admissions:** If an institution fails to provide an admissions decision in writing by the opening day of classes for the fall term and the prospect has submitted a complete admissions application, the NLI shall be declared null and void.

**Reminder:** If a midyear junior college transfer student in the sport of football signs an NLI and the student is denied admission on or before the opening day of classes of the winter or spring term, the NLI shall be declared null and void. However, if such a student does not meet the admissions requirements by the opening of the winter quarter but does meet them by the opening of the spring quarter, then the NLI is still valid.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:** If a prospective student-athlete does not meet the requirements outlined in NLI Provision 6b by the institution’s opening day of classes for the fall term, provided he or she has submitted all necessary documents for eligibility determination, the conference does not have to wait until the opening day of classes to rule on whether the NLI is null and void if the last opportunity to meet those requirements has passed and the prospect has not met them. For example, if the last summer term at a junior college ends two weeks prior to the start of fall classes at the signing institution and the student has not met the junior college transfer requirements by the end of the last summer term, then the NLI could be considered null and void at that time, rather than waiting until the first day of classes at the signing institution.

**Reminder:** The NLI is null and void if the prospective student-athlete becomes a nonqualifier. The NLI remains valid if the prospective student-athlete becomes a partial qualifier per NCAA Division II Bylaw 14.3.2.1.

**ONE-YEAR ABSENCE:** If a student has not attended any institution for at least one academic year, the student may seek to apply this provision. It is permissible for the student to have initially attended an NLI member institution, including the signing institution, and remain eligible for this provision. To apply the provision, the student must make a request to the Director of Athletics of the original signing institution for athletics aid for a subsequent fall term. Thereafter,

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the student must receive a statement from the Director of Athletics indicating the amount of financial aid originally offered is not available. Absent such a statement from the Director of Athletics, the NLI is considered valid and binding.

**Reminder:** A student may seek to apply the One-Year Absence if he or she does not attend an NLI institution for at least one academic year. Accordingly, if a student does not attend an NLI institution for two years, he or she could still seek to apply the One-Year Absence Provision.

**DISCONTINUED SPORT:** The NLI is declared null and void if the signing institution discontinues the student's sport; however, the prospective student-athlete is permitted to sign another NLI in the same signing year, an exception to the one valid NLI per academic year.

**RECRUITING RULES VIOLATION:** An NLI shall be declared null and void if eligibility reinstatement by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff is necessary due to NCAA and/or conference recruiting rules violations.

**JUNIOR COLLEGE MIDYEAR TRANSFERS:** A midyear junior college transfer who fails to graduate from the junior college would maintain a valid NLI provided he or she was a Division I Qualifier or a Division II transfer.

**NOTIFICATION TO PROSPECT:** The NLI signing institution must notify a prospect in writing that his or her NLI is not valid or null and void within five business days from when the institution is made aware of the status of the NLI. The institution must copy its conference NLI administrator on any such notification sent to a prospect.

**Reminder:** An institution must provide written notification to its conference office within five days of a student being denied admission or failing to meet NCAA initial eligibility standards (e.g., nonqualifier).

**FINANCIAL AID REQUIREMENT:** An NLI is null and void if the prospect does not receive at the time of signing a written offer of athletics financial aid applicable for the entire upcoming academic year that is subsequently signed by both the prospect and his or her parent/legal guardian. Midyear junior college football transfers must receive a financial aid award for the remainder of the current academic year. Thus, an NLI signed by a "walk-on" or "non-scholarship student-athlete" is not valid. An institution which submits an NLI to a prospective student-athlete that does not meet the terms of NLI Provision 2 may be in violation of the NLI program and subject to sanctions.

**DEFINITION OF WRITTEN OFFER OF ATHLETICS AID:** The NLI definition of a written offer of athletics aid is defined as athletically related financial aid as opposed to countable aid that is not from an athletics source.

**REDUCTION OF ATHLETICS AID:** Once a prospective student-athlete signs the agreement for a written offer of athletics financial aid, the athletics aid limits must adhere to NCAA regulations and may not be reduced unless otherwise stated on the financial aid agreement; however, if changes occur per the stated agreement, athletics aid must remain a source of aid.

**WHO SIGNS THE NLI:** As a general rule, the only prospective student-athletes who may sign an NLI are students who will be entering four-year institutions for the first time as full-time students. It is not permissible for a junior to sign the NLI. (International and home-schooled prospects shall be managed in accordance with their program's requirements for completion.) This rule's one exception is that 4-2-4 transfer students who are graduating from a junior college may also sign an NLI.

**Reminder:** The only midyear enrollees who may sign an NLI are junior college football transfers who graduate from the junior college at midyear. All other midyear enrollees are only permitted to sign an offer of athletics financial aid.

**MIDYEAR ENROLLEES:** If an individual signs an NLI in November for the following academic year and then graduates from high school at midyear, the institution may not award athletics aid to that prospective student-athlete for the spring term following the prospective student-athlete's high school graduation. Such an arrangement would constitute an impermissible award of an athletics grant-in-aid for a period in excess of one academic year per NCAA Bylaws.

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**SIGNING ONLY ONE NLI:** A student may sign only one valid NLI annually. Thus, a student may not sign a basketball NLI and later sign a soccer NLI. He or she is bound by the first valid NLI signed.

**Reminder:** Inasmuch as a prospective student-athlete may sign only one valid NLI during an academic year, a student who is granted a complete release by the signing institution or an NLI Committee may not sign another NLI during that signing year. Additionally, if an NLI is declared null and void, the student may not sign another NLI during that signing year.

**SIGNING THE NLI:** The prospective student-athlete must sign the NLI and financial aid agreement within 14 days of issuance; otherwise, the NLI is invalid. In turn, the institution must file the NLI with its conference office within 21 days of the date of final signature; otherwise, the NLI is invalid.

**Reminder:** An NLI that has been signed and returned to the institution in accordance with the NLI provisions remains valid until it is declared invalid by the conference office. For example, an NLI that is not filed within the required 21 days with the conference office is considered valid through the 21st day.

**INSTITUTIONAL SIGNATURES REQUIRED PRIOR TO SUBMISSION:** The NLI must be signed and dated by the Director of Athletics (or his/her authorized representative) before submission in duplicate to the prospective student-athlete for his or her signatures. The NLI may be mailed prior to the initial signing date. When an NLI is issued prior to the initial signing date, the "date issued" shall be the initial NLI signing date and not the date that the NLI was signed or mailed by the institution.

**PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN SIGNATURE REQUIRED:** A prospect's parent/legal guardian must cosign the NLI with the prospect if he or she has not reached the age of 21. Falsification of a signature or a signature by a party other than the prospect and the prospect's parent/legal guardian may result in a prospect forfeiting the first year of eligibility at any NLI participating institution.

**COSIGNER REQUESTS:** If the student's parent or legal guardian is not available (e.g., incarcerated, death), it is permissible for another individual to sign the NLI with the student. The cosigner must be approved in advance by the NLI Office. In order to gain approval, the following information must be submitted to the NLI Office for review: Explanation of why a parent or legal guardian is unable to sign the NLI; Include the name and relationship of someone (not a coach or athletics administrator) who has agreed to sign with the student.

**INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID AGREEMENT:** If the institution requires that a parent or legal guardian must sign the financial aid agreement, which accompanies the NLI, for a prospective student-athlete who has not reached the age of 18, the parent or legal guardian signature is not required on the institutional financial aid agreement if the prospective student-athlete is over the age of 18. As such, the parent or legal guardian signature may be required for the NLI (under 21) but not for the financial aid agreement (under 18).

**FALSIFICATION OF THE NLI:** If a student falsified any part of the NLI or has knowledge that his or her parent or guardian falsified any part of the NLI, the student shall forfeit the first year of athletics competition at any NLI participating institution.

**DIVISION I TWO-YEAR COLLEGE TRANSFER, NOT A QUALIFIER:** A Division I 2-4 transfer, nonqualifier, in his or her first year of enrollment at a junior college who signs an NLI would not meet the NCAA requirement to receive athletics aid for the following term of enrollment at an NLI member institution (NCAA Bylaw 14.5.4.2). The NLI would be deemed invalid in this case.

**RECRUITING BAN AFTER SIGNING:** The NLI Recruiting Ban remains in effect until the prospect enrolls at the signing institution or if the prospective student-athlete does not enroll at the signing institution, the recruiting ban will be lifted after the signing institution's next academic year has elapsed. For example, the prospective student-athlete signs in 2008-09 and does not subsequently enroll at that institution for the 2009-10 academic year, the recruiting ban would be lifted at the end of the 2009-10 academic year. Once a student enrolls at the signing institution he or she is governed by applicable NCAA recruiting bylaws.

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**ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT:** Each NLI member institution is required to file with its conference office on an annual basis a copy of the NLI Institutional Commitment Form. The document must be signed and dated by the institution's Director of Athletics prior to submission to the conference office. (Commitment forms are available at [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org).)

**DELIVERY OF THE NLI:** Per NCAA Bylaw 13.1.6.7, any in-person, off-campus contact made with a prospect for the purposes of signing an NLI or other commitment to attend the institution or attendance at activities related to the signing of an NLI or other commitment to attend the institution, shall be prohibited. Further, per NCAA Bylaw 13.1.6.7.1, in-person, off-campus delivery of an NLI by an institutional staff member shall be prohibited. The NLI may be delivered and received by express mail, courier service, regular mail, facsimile machine or electronic mail (e-mail).

**NO ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS ALLOWED TO NLI:** No additions or deletions shall be made to the NLI or the Release Request Form.

**OFFICIAL TIME FOR VALIDITY:** The NLI shall be considered officially signed on the final date of the student's signature and his/her parent/legal guardian. If no time of day is listed, the time of 11:59 p.m. will be presumed.

**STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS:** The NLI is in full force and effect for a period of four (4) years, commencing with the date of the student's signature on the NLI.

**NULLIFICATION OF OTHER AGREEMENTS:** The student's signature on the NLI nullifies any agreements, oral or otherwise, which would release him or her from the conditions stated within the NLI.

**OTHER LETTER OF INTENT PROGRAMS:** A letter of intent signed with a junior college or an NAIA school does not apply to NCAA Division I and II members participating in the NLI program.

**For additional information regarding the NLI program, visit the NLI website: [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org).**

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