

Awards Cheat Sheet

This tip sheet provides guidance regarding applicable NCAA rules governing awards for student-athletes. Please remember to contact the Athletics Compliance Office if you have any questions regarding permissible awards for student-athletes as the applicable NCAA, ACC, and University rules change over time.

Purchasing Restrictions

- **Normal retail value** shall be assigned as the value of an award when determining whether an award meets specified value limits, even when a member institution receives institutional awards from an athletics representative or organization free of charge or at a special reduced rate. Normal retail value is the cost to the institution that is based solely on volume and is available to all purchasers of a similar volume and that does not involve an obligation to make additional purchases to enable the supplier to recover the costs for the original purchase.
- An institution **may not** enter into a **supplementary-purchase arrangement** with an awards supplier whereby the supplier agrees to sell an award (e.g., a watch or ring) at a price below the maximum amount specified by NCAA legislation with the understanding that the institution will make additional purchases of other unrelated items to enable the supplier to recover the costs for the original purchase. Such an arrangement would exceed the specific-value limitations placed on permissible awards
 - Normal retail value is the cost to the institution that is based solely on volume and is available to all purchasers of a similar volume and that does not involve an obligation to make additional purchases to enable the supplier to recover the costs for the original purchase.
 - Normal retail value shall be assigned as the value of an award when determining whether an award meets specified value limits, even when a member institution receives institutional awards from an athletics representative or organization free of charge or at a special reduced rate. (see Figures 16-1, 16-2, & 16-3)

Maximum Value and Number of Awards

- The value of an award provided to a student-athlete **may not** exceed specified value limits. For underclassmen this value limit is \$225. For seniors who have exhausted their eligibility, or are graduating and not returning for a 5th year this value limit is \$425. (see Figures 16-1, 16-2, & 16-3).
- Student-athletes **may not** contribute to an award's purchase in order to meet those limits.
- An institution **may not** permit student-athletes to make financial contributions to the purchase of awards.
- For example, if an institution would like to provide a non-senior student-athlete with an annual participation award that has a value of \$250, the student-athlete is not permitted under NCAA legislation to contribute \$25 in an effort to keep the institution's contribution to the award at the \$225 maximum value of the annual participation award. Further, if an institution chooses to provide an award with a value less than the maximum value permissible under NCAA legislation, it is not permissible for a student-athlete to make a financial contribution to upgrade the award.
- An institution **may not combine the value limits of awards** given in a sport during the same season, or given to student-athletes who participate in more than one sport, in order to provide an award more expensive than permissible under separate application to some or all of its participating student-athletes.

Selling or Exchanging Awards

- Student-athletes **may not** sell, exchange, or assign any item received for intercollegiate athletics participation, even if the student-athlete's name or picture does not appear on the item received for intercollegiate athletics participation. This prohibition extends to awards received for conference championships, national championships, or special achievements. (see Bylaw 16.1.4)

Uniformity of Awards

- Awards presented by a member institution, conference or other approved agency must be uniform for all team members receiving the same award.

Here is an example to illustrate uniformity of awards:

The head women's soccer coach at Miami is placing orders for the student-athletes' participation gifts. Traditionally, the coaches have provided a jacket after a student-athlete's first year; blanket after the second; watch after the third and a ring to the seniors. Some of the seniors asked for a pendant instead of a ring.

Is it permissible to provide some senior student-athletes with a ring and some with a pendant as long as the cost of each award does not exceed NCAA maximum limitations?

No. Awards presented by a member institution, conference or other approved agency must be uniform for all team members receiving the award. A permissible awarding agency (e.g., member institution, management of event) may provide to student-athletes more than one type of an award (e.g., rings to seniors, watches to underclassmen), provided the award given is uniform within a category (e.g., all watches must be the same). [NCAA Bylaw 16.1.2 and S.I. - 12/13/91- Uniformity of awards to student-athletes]

Special Event Participation Awards

- Special event participation awards may include awards that are based on a level of achievement (e.g., all-tournament award, finalist award, place-finish award) in the event, provided the **awards are uniform within each level and the combined value of all awards received for participation in the particular type of special event (e.g., conference championship; other established meets, tournaments and featured individual competition) does not exceed the maximum permissible value of such awards** (see Figure 16.1).

Administrative Costs

- Administrative fees (e.g., tooling charges, tax, shipping and handling) for awards (e.g., national championship rings) that are separate from the value of the award do not need to be included when calculating the value of the award.

Eligibility for Awards

- Athletics awards given to individual student-athletes shall be limited to those approved or administered by the member institution, its conference or an approved agency and shall be limited in value and number as specified per NCAA regulations.
- Awards received for intercollegiate athletics participation may not be sold, exchanged or assigned for another item of value, even if the student-athlete's name or picture does not appear on the award. NCAA Bylaw 16.1.4.
- Awards for participation in intercollegiate athletics may be presented each year, limited in value and number as specified in Figure 16-1, but may not be provided to a student-athlete prior to the day of the institution's final home contest of the regular playing season in the particular sport. Awards for participation in special events may be provided only to student-athletes eligible to participate in the competition.
- Regular Season Conference Championship - The total value of any single award received for a conference championship may not to exceed \$325 (NCAA Figure 16-2). Awards for winning a conference championship based on regular season standings in a team sport may be provided only to student-athletes who were eligible to participate during the regular season. (See NCAA Bylaw 16.1.4.2)
- Bowl Game Awards for Student-Athletes - The combined value of all awards presented to student-athletes from the sponsor of the bowl game shall not exceed \$550 in value. The combined value of additional awards presented by the institution to its student-athletes for bowl-game participation is subject to a separate \$375 limitation (NCAA Figure 16-1). Only those student-athletes eligible to participate in the bowl game may receive awards per NCAA Bylaw 16.1.4.1. Thus the following individuals would not be eligible to receive Bowl Game Awards:
 - Continuing transfer student-athletes that are serving a transfer year of residence during 2010-11;

- Midyear Enrollee (Freshman or Transfer) Student-Athletes ; and
- Nonqualifiers

- Postseason Awards for GA's, Undergraduate Assistant Coaches, or Volunteer Coaches – May receive the awards that are given to the student-athletes participating in postseason competition (e.g., bowl game, NCAA tournament). Such awards are not considered compensation (Staff Interpretation 11/23/1988).

- Student-Athletes who are Medical Noncounters – A student-athlete who is a counter (counts against the team's squad limits) with remaining eligibility who becomes injured or ill to the point that he or she never again will be able to participate may receive any awards given to team members for athletics participation. (Staff Interpretation from 01/29/1992)

- Participation Awards for Student-Athletes Serving a Transfer Year – it is up to the discretion of the institution whether or not they will provide a student-athlete who is ineligible for competition due to serving an academic year in residence (transfer year) with annual participation awards or awards in recognition of special attainments or contributions to a team's competitive season (e.g., scholar athlete, most inspirational player). [Staff Interpretation from 12/07/1988]

- Postseason Awards for Student-Athletes Serving a Transfer Year – student-athletes ineligible for intercollegiate competition but eligible for practice (e.g., transfer students) would not be permitted to receive awards for conference or national championships even if a conference champion is declared based upon regular-season standings, inasmuch as the student-athlete was not eligible to participate in such events. [Staff Interpretation from 12/07/1988]

References

NCAA Bylaws 12 & 16; Types of Awards, Awarding Agencies, Maximum Value and Numbers of Awards and 16.1.5.4 – Student – Educational Column – 12/5/13;

Administrative Fees Associated with Awards (I) – Staff Interpretation – 02/06/09;;

Student-Athletes Selling Items Received for Participation in Intercollegiate Athletics – Educational Column – 08/18/03;

Assignment of retail value -- special reduced rate – Official Interpretation – 10/01/91;

Receipt of established bowl award - Staff Interpretation 11/23/88;

Expenses or Awards Provided to a Counter who Becomes Injured or Ill - Staff Interpretation 01/29/92;

Awards to student-athletes ineligible for competition - Staff Interpretation 12/07/88

FIGURE 16-1
Participation Awards [A] [R]

| Type of Award | Maximum Value of Award | Number of Times Award May Be Received | Permissible Awarding Agencies | Maximum Number of Permissible Awarding Agencies |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Annual Participation — Underclassmen | \$225 | Up to maximum value per year per sport | Institution | 1 |
| Annual Participation — Senior | \$425 | Up to maximum value per year per sport | Institution | 1 |
| Special Event Participation | | | | |
| • Participation in postseason conference championship contest or tournament | \$375* | Once per event | • Institution • Management of event (may include conference office) | 2 |
| • Participation in postseason NCAA championship contest or tournament | Institution — \$375 NCAA — No limit | Once per event | • Institution • NCAA | 2 |
| • Participation in all-star game or postseason bowl | \$400 (Institution) \$550 (Management of event) | Once per event | • Institution • Management of event | 2 |
| • Participation in other established meets, tournaments and featured individual competition | \$400* | Once per event | • Institution • Management of event | 2 |

*The combined value of all awards received for participation in this type of event from the institution and the management of the event may not exceed the published value.

FIGURE 16-2
Championship Awards [A] [R]

| Type of Award | Maximum Value of Award | Number of Times Award May Be Received | Permissible Awarding Agencies | Maximum Number of Permissible Awarding Agencies |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| National Championship conducted by NCAA | \$415* | Once per championship | • Institution** • Conference** | 2 |
| National Championship not conducted by NCAA*** | \$415* | Once per championship | • Institution** • Conference** | 2 |
| Conference Championship — regular season | \$325*# | Once per championship | • Institution** • Conference** | 2 |
| Conference Championship — postseason contest or tournament | \$325*# | Once per championship | • Institution** • Conference** | 2 |

* Each permissible awarding agency is subject to a separate \$415/\$325 limit per award.

** Award may be provided by another organization recognized by the institution or conference to act in its place.

*** Applies only to sports or classification divisions in which the NCAA does not conduct championships. Teams must be designated as a "national champion" by a national wire-service poll or the national coaches association in that sport.

The combined value of both awards shall not exceed \$325 if same institution wins conference regular-season and postseason championships.

FIGURE 16-3
Special Achievement Awards [A] [R]
(Revised: 4/25/18)

| Type of Award | Maximum Value of Award | Number of Times Award May Be Received | Permissible Awarding Agencies | Maximum Number of Permissible Awarding Agencies |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Special attainments or contribution to team's season (e.g., scholar-athlete, most improved player, most minutes played, most valuable player) | \$175 | Once per category of award per year | Institution | 1 |
| Most valuable player — special event* | \$325** | Once per event | • Institution • Conference • Organization approved by institution or conference | Unlimited |
| Most valuable player — bowl game or all-star contest | \$350 | Once per event | Sponsoring entity of all-star contest or certified postseason bowl | 1 |
| Established regional/national recognition awards (e.g., Wade Trophy, Heisman Trophy) | \$325 | Once per year per award | Management of award program | 1 |
| Trophy recognizing established national award | Unlimited | Once per year | Management of award program | 1 |
| Trophy recognizing conference "athlete of the year" | \$1,500 | Once per year to one male and one female | Conference | 1 |
| Trophy recognizing conference "scholar-athlete of the year" | \$1,500 | Once per year to one male and one female | Conference | 1 |
| Specialized performance in single contest or during limited time period (e.g., player of the game, player of the week) | \$80 (certificate, medal or plaque only) | Unlimited | • Conference • Outside organization (e.g., local business) | Unlimited |
| Hometown award | \$80 | Unlimited | Group (other than institution's booster club) located in the student-athlete's hometown | Unlimited |

*The award recipient must be selected by a recognized organization approved by a member institution or conference.

** Each permissible awarding agency is subject to separate \$325 limit per award. Each awarding agency may provide only a single award for each event to each student-athlete.