



## ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES AND INTERPRETATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT (SIGNED DURING THE 2023-24 SIGNING PERIODS)

### THE BASICS:

**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.

**AGREEMENT:** 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 prospective student-athlete meets all applicable university, conference and NCAA regulations for receipt of financial aid. The athletic aid agreement may be awarded for more than one academic year in Division I per NCAA rules.

**SATISFYING THE TERMS OF THE NLI:** A prospective student-athlete satisfies the terms of the NLI by attending the signing institution for at least one academic year (i.e., two semesters or three quarters) as a full-time student or by graduating from a two-year college. Graduation from a two-year college applies if the prospective student-athlete signs prior to two-year college enrollment and later attends a two-year college instead of the signing institution. If a signee is a 4-2-4 transfer, and if the NLI was not satisfied at the initial four-year institution, graduation from the two-year college satisfies the NLI signed by prospective student-athlete prior to enrollment at the initial four-year institution.

**Reminder:** If a prospective student-athlete enrolls midyear at the signing institution, the NLI is satisfied after full-time attendance for two semesters or three quarters (e.g., spring semester/fall semester).

**NLI PENALTY:** If a prospective student-athlete does not attend the signing institution or attends the signing institution for less than one full academic year, and enrolls at another NLI institution, they may not represent the second institution in intercollegiate athletics competition until completing one academic year in residence at the NLI member institution. Additionally, the prospective student-athlete will lose one season of competition in all sports. While serving the NLI penalty, the prospective student-athlete is permitted to practice and receive athletics aid, if allowed by the institution.

**NLI PENALTY EXCEPTIONS:** (NLI Penalty Exceptions Q & A Guide located in the NLI Portal Resources)

**Head Coach Departure:** If the head coach at the signing institution departs after the prospective student-athlete signs the NLI and before triggering attendance (full-time enrollment attending classes in a regular academic term) at the signing institution or participation in preseason practice, whichever occurs earlier, the signee can submit an NLI release request citing the head coach departure and the signing institution must grant the NLI complete release.

**One-Term of Attendance.** If the NLI signee attends the signing institution for one full-time academic term (e.g., semester or quarter), the signee can submit an NLI release request and the signing institution must grant the NLI complete release.

**FAILURE TO ENROLL:** If a prospective student-athlete was admitted to the signing institution and was initially eligible but fails to enroll at the signing institution, they have not fulfilled the NLI agreement to attend the signing institution for one academic year. The NLI would remain binding.

**DELAYED ENROLLMENT:** The NLI delayed enrollment agreement is to be used when the NLI signee and the signing institution mutually agree to delay the signee's enrollment to the next academic year after the NLI year. See the NLI delayed enrollment agreement form and FAQs located in the NLI Portal resources section for more information.

**EARLY SIGNING PERIOD PENALTIES:** A prospective student-athlete who will participate in football is prohibited from signing an NLI prior to the initial signing date for Division I or II football. A prospective student-athlete who signs an NLI in a sport other than football prior to the initial signing date for Division I or II football will be ineligible for 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 anticipates participating in football, the student should delay signing an NLI until the initial signing date for Division I or II football.

- If the prospective student-athlete signs an NLI with a sport other than football after the football signing period starts, the prospective student-athlete could participate in football at the signing institution and will not be subject to any penalty.
- If the student-athlete decides to participate in football after enrolling at the institution, the student-athlete will not be subject to the early signing period penalty if the institution's football coach(s) did not have recruiting contact prior to initial enrollment. Recruiting contact includes written correspondence, phone calls/texts and in-person on-campus/off-campus interaction.

**POPULATING THE NLI:** The NLI is available starting October 1 each year and located in the NLI portal. Although an institution can issue the NLI starting October 1, the prospective student-athlete and parent are not permitted to sign the NLI and athletics aid agreement until the first signing date for the specified sport. The NLI must be populated in the NLI portal and cannot be populated from a third-party system or from a blank NLI. Institutions should refrain from changing text in the populated fields.

**Reminder:** 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 sent by the institution.

#### **NLI RECRUITING BAN:**

**Cease communication:** Once a prospective student-athlete signs an NLI, all NLI member institutions and conferences must cease contact with the NLI signee and his or her family members. Any contact more than an exchange of a greeting would result in an NLI Recruiting Ban Violation regardless of the conversation. The conversation does not have to result in a recruiting discussion for a violation to occur. It is understandable that a coach from another institution, due to the relationship established during the recruiting process, may want to call or send a note to congratulate the prospective student-athlete for signing his or her NLI. This exchange is permissible but must be timely following the date of signing and must not be more than the congratulatory dialogue.

**Initiated by NLI signee:** If communication is initiated by the NLI signee, the coach is obligated to ask if the student has signed an NLI and proceed to inquire with the compliance staff to see if an NLI has been signed. The coach should cease communication until the student's NLI status is determined by the compliance staff.

**Siblings:** If a sibling of an NLI signee is also a prospective student-athlete, all communication by other coaches recruiting the sibling must be specific to the sibling and not the NLI signee.

**Complimentary admission:** The receipt of complimentary admissions by a prospective student-athlete during an official or unofficial visit is a permissible NCAA benefit to a prospective student-athlete and others accompanying the prospective student-athlete. Since this benefit is part of the recruiting process, if a prospective student-athlete has signed an NLI with another institution and is accompanying another prospective student-athlete on his or her visit, the signee cannot receive complimentary admission to the athletic event even if the signing institution supports such admission. Likewise, if the signee wishes to attend an athletic event at another institution and the signing institution is supportive of the signee receiving the complimentary admission from the other institution, the signee cannot receive the complimentary admission.

**During NLI appeal process:** During an NLI appeal of an institution's no release decision, if information is brought forward to the NLI office regarding an allegation of a violation of the NLI recruiting ban, the communication with the NLI signee and/or his or her family members by another institution will be presented to the NLI Committee.

The standard for review in considering all factors associated with the NLI appeal will include an analysis under a reasonable-person standard, focusing on whether the communication would have affected a "reasonable-person's" decision to attend the institution. If a significant recruiting advantage is gained, the committee may impose conditions impacting both the institution and student-athlete (e.g., withholding competition) to address the recruiting advantage gained.

**Time Period:** The NLI Recruiting Ban applies until the individual enrolls full-time at a four-year college, participates in preseason practice, or enrolls in a summer term while receiving athletic aid, whichever is earlier. 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 during the 2023-24 signing year and does not enroll at the signing institution for the 2024-25 academic year, the recruiting ban would be lifted at the end of the institution's 2024-25 academic year. Thus, the prospective student-athlete is under the NLI recruiting ban during the academic year they should have been attending the signing institution.

**Submission of NLI Release Request:** Once an NLI signee submits an NLI release request through the online process, the NLI Recruiting Ban will be lifted, allowing a signee to communicate with other coaches and prohibiting an institution from blocking communication.

**Notification of Transfer:** Once a prospective student-athlete enrolls at the signing institution, the signee is governed by applicable NCAA recruiting bylaws. The NCAA rule regarding Division I and II notification of transfer would apply to an NLI signee who triggered the NCAA definition of a transfer student-athlete.

- **Summer school:** The NLI recruiting ban would no longer apply to an NLI signee who attended summer school at the signing institution and received athletics aid. Once an NLI signee attends summer school or required summer activities (Division I) at the signing institution, the signee triggers the NCAA definition of transfer student-athlete; therefore, notification of transfer is applicable.

**NLI Recruiting Ban Violation Penalty:** Institutions are obligated to self-report NLI recruiting ban violations through the NLI Portal. The NLI recruiting ban penalty is as follows:

**First violation for a sport program.**

- Letter of reprimand to the coach and sport program; and
- The NLI member institution must pay \$500 fine (Division I), \$250 fine (Division II).

**Second violation (within a four-year time period) for a sport program.**

- Letter of reprimand to the coach and sport program; and
- The NLI member institution must pay \$1,000 fine (Division I), \$500 fine (Division II).

**NCAA REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO ISSUING AN NLI:**

**NCAA ID:** A prospective student-athlete must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and be placed on an Institutional Request List (IRL) prior to being provided a written offer of athletically related financial aid per NCAA rules. Further, the NLI program requires the prospective student-athlete's NCAA ID to be included on the NLI. This requirement also includes two-year college prospective student-athletes in all sports.

**AMATEURISM CERTIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE:** In Division I, per NCAA rules, a high school, preparatory school or transfer prospective student-athlete must complete the amateurism certification questionnaire administered by the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to receiving a written offer of athletically related financial aid. The NCAA Eligibility Center registration process includes the amateurism questions; therefore, a prospective student-athlete will answer questions regarding sport participation (formerly the amateurism questionnaire). A prospective student-athlete cannot finalize their registration without the sports participation section being completed. An institution will not be able to add a prospective student-athlete to the IRL if the sports participation questions are not completed.

**TRANSCRIPT SUBMISSION:** In Division II, per NCAA rules, an institution shall not provide a prospective student-athlete with an NLI or written offer of athletically related financial aid until the prospective student-athlete presents the institution with a high school, preparatory school or college transcript (official or unofficial).

**SIGNING THE NLI:**

**WHO SIGNS:** An individual can sign an NLI until enrolling full-time at a four-year college, participating in preseason practice, or enrolling in a summer term while receiving athletic aid, whichever is earlier. (International and home school prospective student-athletes shall be determined in accordance with their secondary education's requirements for completion).

To sign the NLI, the prospective student-athlete must be in position to enroll at the signing institution the upcoming fall term. If a prospective student-athlete reclassifies their graduation year (e.g., junior to senior), the prospective student-athlete can sign during the NLI signing year prior to the upcoming fall enrollment. The institution should retain supporting documentation to show the prospective student-athlete is on track to graduate early.

Two-year college (2-4) transfers are permitted to sign an NLI. 2-4 transfers who do not have a previously signed NLI do not have to graduate for NLI purposes but may need to graduate to meet applicable NCAA transfer rules. When completing the NLI in the NLI portal, a graduation date does not need to be entered on the NLI unless graduation is required for either NCAA or NLI rules.

4-2-4 transfers are permitted to sign an NLI. If a 4-2-4 transfer has a previously signed NLI for the initial four-year institution, they must graduate from the two-year college to satisfy the NLI if the NLI is still binding.

4-2-4 transfers who do not have a previously signed NLI or who have satisfied the NLI at the initial four-year institution, do not have to graduate for NLI purposes but may need to graduate to meet applicable NCAA transfer rule.

Four-year college transfers are not permitted to sign an NLI; therefore, are not bound by NLI signing dates to sign an athletics aid agreement. The four-year transfer NLI will be implemented for the 2024-25 NLI signing year for four-year transfers signing 2025-26 NLIs.

**TWO-YEAR COLLEGE MIDYEAR ENROLLEE:** Only two-year college football transfer prospective student-athletes have a separate signing date specific to midyear enrollment. Although the midyear two-year college football transfer will enroll during the 2023-24 signing year, the prospective student-athlete will sign the 2024-25 NLI with spring 2024 athletics aid. Division I is permitted to offer multiyear athletics aid; therefore, the financial aid agreement can include spring 2024 and the 2024-25 academic year accompanying the 2024-25 NLI.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL EARLY GRADUATION/MIDYEAR ENROLLEE:**

- **Signing the NLI** - If a prospective student-athlete graduates from high school early (e.g., December), the prospective student-athlete is permitted to sign an NLI during a signing period prior to midyear enrollment (early signing period if sport has an early signing period or single signing period) and enroll at the signing institution midyear.

#### **Athletics Aid for Early/Midyear Enrollees**

- **Division I** – In Division I, the signee can receive athletics aid for the upcoming spring term in addition to the athletics aid for the academic year corresponding with the NLI. Since Division I is permitted to offer multiyear athletics aid, a prospective student-athlete graduating at midyear may sign an NLI during the early signing period and include athletics aid for spring 2024 and the 2024-25 academic year accompanying the 2024-25 NLI. It is the institution's discretion to provide spring 2024 athletics aid. Also, in Division I, football prospective student-athletes are permitted to sign an NLI in December during the football early signing period and enroll at the signing institution midyear.
- **Division II** - If a prospective student-athlete signs an NLI in November 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 more than one academic year per NCAA rules.
- **International Academic Calendar – Midyear Graduation** - If a prospective student-athlete's academic calendar is such that graduation occurs in the fall and they are enrolling midyear, an institution must wait until the early signing period (if sport has an early signing period) or a fall signing date prior to the upcoming midyear enrollment. For example, a prospective student-athlete signing a 2024-25 NLI is expected to enroll in fall 2024. A prospective student-athlete graduating from secondary school during fall 2024 could not enroll in fall 2024 since they would still be attending secondary school.

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION TRANSFER:** A transfer student from an international collegiate institution (college, university or two-year college), is considered a four-year transfer per NCAA rules.

**ONE VALID NLI:** A prospective student-athlete may sign only one valid NLI annually. For example, a prospective student-athlete may not sign an NLI for basketball and later sign an NLI for soccer. A prospective student-athlete is bound by the first valid NLI signed.

**Invalid, Complete Release or Null and Void Status:** It is permissible to sign another NLI in the same signing year after the signee is granted a complete release, the signee's NLI is declared null and void or invalid.

**SIGNING DEADLINE:** The prospective student-athlete must sign the NLI and athletics aid agreement within **7 days of issuance**; otherwise, the NLI is invalid. The 7-day signing deadline would not apply if the prospective student-athlete receives the NLI on the last day of a signing period (e.g., August 1). The 7-day signing deadline only applies if there are 7 days remaining for the signing period.

**Division I Football Early Signing Period Exception:** The 7-day signing deadline does not apply to the football early signing period since the football early signing is not 7 days in length. The signing deadline ends at 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the signing period.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL SIGNATURES REQUIRED PRIOR TO SUBMISSION:**

**NLI:** The NLI must be signed and dated by the director of athletics (or designee) before submission to the prospective student-athlete for his or her signature. The signature can be an electronic or digital signature.

- **Electronic Signature:** Allows the signee to use a mouse, stylus or finger to sign. This is a replica of the signee's signature.
- **Digital Signature:** Allows the signee to select a signature font or type a signature. The signature will include an authenticated code. The digital signature is permissible provided it can be verified with the authenticated code accompanying the signature or if the platform provides an audit page for verification.

**ATHLETICS AID AGREEMENT:** In accordance with NCAA rules, the institution's financial aid authority must sign the athletics aid agreement prior to submitting the agreement to the prospective student-athlete. To determine if the institution's financial aid authority did sign the athletics aid agreement appropriately, institutions should also include a date of signature to ensure the timing of the financial aid authority's acknowledgement of the agreement. The signature can be an electronic or digital signature.

**PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN SIGNATURE REQUIRED:** A prospective student-athlete's parent/legal guardian must cosign the NLI with the prospective student-athlete if they have not reached the age of 21. The prospective student-athlete and parent/legal guardian do not have to sign the NLI on the same day but do have to sign the NLI within the 7-day signing deadline. Therefore, if a prospective student-athlete signs the NLI within the 7-day signing deadline and the parent/legal guardian signs the NLI after the 7-day signing deadline, the NLI would be declared invalid. The signature can be an electronic or digital signature.

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

**INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID AGREEMENT:** If the institution does not require that a parent/legal guardian sign the financial aid agreement for a prospective student-athlete who is over the age of 18, the parent/legal guardian does not have to sign the athletics aid agreement if it is accompanying the NLI. Thus, the parent/legal guardian signature may not be included on the athletics aid agreement if the prospective student-athlete is over 18 but must be included on the NLI if the prospective student-athlete is under 21.

**COSIGNER REQUESTS:** If the prospective student-athlete's parent/legal guardian is not available to sign the NLI (e.g., incarcerated, death), it is permissible for another individual to sign the NLI with the prospective student-athlete. The cosigner must be approved in advance from the NLI office by the compliance office submitting the request through the NLI portal. The following information must be submitted for review: name of the prospective student-athlete, explanation of why a parent/legal guardian is unable to sign the NLI and the name and relationship of the individual (not a coach or athletics administrator) who has agreed to sign with the prospective student-athlete.

**OFFICIAL TIME FOR VALIDITY:** The NLI shall be considered officially signed on the latest date of the prospective student-athlete's signature and his or her parent/legal guardian signature. If no time of day is listed, the time of 11:59 p.m. will be presumed unless the date signed is the first date of a signing period. On the first date of a signing period, the prospective student-athlete and parent/legal guardian are not permitted to sign the NLI prior to 7 a.m. local time. Consequently, the NLI shall be declared invalid if there is no time/date of signature if signed on the first day of a signing period. The time of signing must include a designated A.M. or P.M. if signed on the first day of a signing period.

**DATES ON NLI AND ATHLETICS AID AGREEMENT:** The date of signature by the prospective student-athlete and parent/legal guardian on the NLI and on the athletics aid agreement do not need to be the same date; however, the athletics aid agreement accompanying the NLI must be signed within the 7-day NLI signing deadline. If an athletics aid agreement is provided to a prospective student-athlete without an NLI, the prospective student-athlete could sign the athletics aid agreement provided the signing of the athletics aid agreement takes place on or after the initial NLI signing date in the signee's sport. The institution may later issue an NLI which the prospective student-athlete can also sign. The institution can attach the previously signed athletics aid agreement to the NLI. In this case, the prospective student-athlete's athletics aid agreement would include the prospective student-athlete's date of signature before the date of signature on the NLI.

## **FINANCIAL AID:**

*See page 5 for additional financial aid guidelines for midyear enrollees.*

**FINANCIAL AID REQUIREMENT:** Financial aid awarded by an institution to a prospective student-athlete must conform to the rules and regulations of the NCAA, the awarding institution and the institution's conference. The offer must list the terms and conditions of the award and must be for the entire academic year. Multiyear athletics aid is permissible in Division I. The athletics aid award shall not be awarded for more than one academic year in Division II. The athletics aid cannot be awarded for less than one academic year other than for a football midyear two-year college transfer.

**DIVISION I - MULTIYEAR ATHLETICS AID:** An institution is permitted to offer a prospective student-athlete athletics aid for a multiyear period in Division I. The athletics aid agreement accompanying the NLI must be for that same entire academic year (i.e., 2024-25 aid with 2024-25 NLI). It is not permissible to offer an NLI with a multiyear aid agreement that includes zero amount of athletics

aid for the first academic year. The athletics aid accompanying the NLI must align with the same NLI year.

**MIDYEAR TWO-YEAR COLLEGE FOOTBALL TRANSFER STUDENT-ATHLETES:** Midyear two-year college football transfer student-athletes must receive a financial aid award for the remainder of the current academic year. If the institution does not renew the athletics aid for the following academic year and the student-athlete requests an NLI release, the student-athlete must be released of the NLI agreement.

**NO ATHLETICS AID AWARDED:** An NLI signed by a "walk on" or "nonscholarship student-athlete" is not valid. An institution that submits an NLI to a prospective student-athlete who does not meet the terms of NLI Provision for financial aid is 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 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 rules and regulations and may not be reduced unless otherwise stated on the financial aid agreement. If changes occur per the stated agreement, allowing for athletics aid to be reduced to accommodate for another source of financial aid, the total amount of financial aid shall not be reduced. Athletics aid must always remain a source of financial aid for the NLI to remain binding.

**RELEASE OF OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE ATHLETICALLY RELATED FINANCIAL AID:** If a prospective student-athlete is awarded institutional financial aid unrelated to athletics that is of equal or greater value than his or her signed award of athletically related financial aid, they may release the institution of its obligation to provide the athletically related financial aid. The institution would null and void the NLI upon confirmation the signee will attend the signing institution.

**VOLUNTARY WITHDRAW:** If a prospective student-athlete or student-athlete voluntarily withdraws from the team, the NLI should remain binding. The institution shall not declare the NLI null and void if they have not fulfilled the NLI agreement. If the institution cancels the athletics aid agreement, in this case, the NLI remains binding.

**DIVISION I VOLUNTARY WITHDRAW (TRANSFERS):** If an institution cancels the student-athlete's athletics aid for the spring term due to the student-athlete's notification of transfer, the NLI would remain binding and the decision regarding the student-athlete's NLI would be determined through the NLI release process if the student-athlete does not fulfill the NLI.

**NLI SIGNING DATE RESTRICTIONS:** If an institution is awarding athletics aid without the NLI, a prospective student-athlete is not permitted to sign an athletics aid agreement before the initial NLI signing date in each signing period. Therefore, for Division I basketball with initial signing dates in both November and April or Division I football with initial signing dates in both December and February, an athletics aid agreement may not be signed before the first signing period, after the first signing period ends, or before the next signing period begins. For sports with a single NLI signing period, an athletic aid agreement cannot be signed before the signing period begins in November.

## **VALIDATION PROCESS:**

**CONFERENCE OFFICE:** The conference office is responsible for validating NLIs to ensure its member institutions administer the NLI according to the NLI provisions and related guidelines. 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. The conference office must act on the uploaded NLI in the NLI portal in a timely manner to ensure institutional visibility and to maintain accurate NLI records.

**14-DAY DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION TO CONFERENCE OFFICE:** The 14-day submission deadline is 14 days from the final signature on the NLI. This is the signature date of the prospective student-athlete or parent/legal guardian. An NLI that is not uploaded within the required 14 days after the final signature is considered valid through the 14th day. If the institution uploads the NLI to the conference office after the 14-day deadline; the conference office will declare the NLI invalid.

**INVALID NLI:** The signing institution must notify a prospective student-athlete in writing that his or her NLI is not valid within five business days from when the institution is made aware of the status of the NLI. The prospective student-athlete is permitted to sign another NLI during the same signing period or during another signing period for the conference office to validate.

## **NULL AND VOID:**

**The NLI shall be declared null and void if any of the following occur:**

- 1. 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 prospective student-athlete must be informed in writing by the signing institution of the status of his or her admissions.

**FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS:** A prospective student-athlete has an obligation to provide, by request, a transcript of his or her academic record and an application for admission to the institution. If the prospective student-athlete fails to submit the necessary academic credentials and/or application to determine an admission decision prior to September 1, the NLI office per its review with the institution will determine the status of the NLI.

- If the institution has concern that a prospective student-athlete purposely failed to provide all necessary academic credentials to the institution or purposely did not complete necessary academic requirements (e.g., required class), the NLI office may determine the NLI remain binding.
- If it is determined that the prospective student-athlete was instructed by the signing institution to not complete the admissions process, the NLI office may declare the NLI null and void.

**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 prospective student-athlete has submitted a complete admissions application, which includes final transcripts, the NLI shall be declared null and void.

**FOOTBALL MIDYEAR TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ENROLLEE:** A two-year college prospective student-athlete who signs an NLI during the first three days of the football midyear JC transfer signing period (also the football early signing period) has the option to enroll midyear or the upcoming fall term. If a football two-year college transfer

signs an NLI during the football midyear JC transfer signing period, after the football early signing dates conclude, the signee is required to be admitted and eligible per 2-4 transfer requirements on or before the opening day of classes of the winter or spring term. If the requirement is not met, the NLI shall be declared null and void. For institutions on the quarter system, if such a prospective student-athlete does not meet the admissions or eligibility requirements by the opening of the winter quarter but does meet the requirements by the opening of the spring quarter, the NLI is still valid.

- 2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:** If a prospective student-athlete does not meet NCAA initial eligibility requirements, conference or institutional requirements for athletics financial aid or two-year college transfer requirements the NLI shall be declared null and void by the opening day of classes for the fall term. (*See exception related to eligibility waiver*)

If a prospective student-athlete does not meet eligibility requirements by the institution's opening day of classes for the fall term, provided they have submitted all necessary documents for eligibility determination, the institution does not have to wait until the opening day of classes to determine whether the NLI is null and void if the last opportunity to meet those requirements has passed and the prospective student-athlete has not met them. For example, if the last summer term at a two-year college ends two weeks prior to the start of fall classes at the signing institution and the prospective student-athlete has not met the 2-4 transfer requirements by the end of the last summer term, the NLI could be considered null and void at that time, rather than waiting until the first day of classes at the signing institution.

**DIVISION I ACADEMIC REDSHIRT:** The NLI remains valid if the prospective student-athlete is an academic redshirt. It is permissible for an academic redshirt to receive athletically related financial aid unless otherwise stated on the institution's athletics aid agreement that the prospective student-athlete must be eligible for competition to receive the athletics aid. If athletics aid is not permitted, the NLI is declared null and void.

**DIVISION II PARTIAL QUALIFIER:** The NLI remains valid if the prospective student-athlete becomes a partial qualifier per NCAA Division II rules unless otherwise stated on the institution's athletics aid agreement that the prospective student-athlete must be eligible for competition to receive athletics aid. If athletics aid is not permitted, the NLI is declared null and void.

**FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY PROCESS:** The prospective student-athlete has an obligation to register with and provide information to the NCAA Eligibility Center. If the prospective student-athlete fails to submit the necessary documentation for an initial-eligibility decision and has not attended classes at the signing institution, the NLI office, per its review with the institution, will determine the status of the NLI.

- If the institution has concern that a prospective student-athlete purposely failed to provide all necessary documentation for an initial-eligibility decision to the NCAA Eligibility Center, based on its review, the NLI office may determine the NLI remain binding.
- If it is determined that the prospective student-athlete was instructed by the signing institution to not complete the initial eligibility process, the NLI office may declare the NLI null and void.

**ELIGIBILITY WAIVER:** A prospective student-athlete's NLI will remain valid while a waiver is pending. The NLI should be declared null and void if the waiver is denied, not permitting athletics aid. The NLI will remain valid if the waiver is partially approved, permitting athletics aid, unless otherwise stated on the institution's athletics aid agreement that the prospective student-athlete must be eligible for competition to receive athletics aid. If athletics aid is not permitted, the NLI is declared null and void.

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN QUALIFIER STATUS AFTER FALL TERM CLASSES:** Division I: If a prospective student-athlete was declared a nonqualifier by the NCAA Eligibility Center and is not a qualifier by the opening day of classes for the fall term, the NLI must be declared null and void even if the prospective student-athlete is not enrolling for the fall term and is taking steps during the fall term or academic year to obtain qualifier status.

- 3. ONE-YEAR ABSENCE:** If a prospective student-athlete has not attended any institution (two-year or four-year) for at least one academic year, they may seek to apply the one-year absence. *Service in active duty with the U.S. armed forces or an official church mission for at least 12 months can use the One-Year Absence to null and void the NLI.*

To apply the one-year absence, the prospective student-athlete must make a request to the director of athletics of the signing institution for athletics aid for the ensuing fall term. If the prospective student-athlete receives a statement from the director of athletics indicating the amount of financial aid originally offered is not available, the NLI shall be declared null and void and recorded as such with the NLI office. Absent such a statement from the director of athletics, the NLI is considered binding.

**Reminder:** It is permissible for the student-athlete to have initially attended the signing institution for one semester and remain eligible for the One-Year Absence Provision. In this case, a prospective student-athlete may seek to apply this provision if they do not then attend a two or four-year institution for at least one academic year. Accordingly, if a prospective student-athlete does not attend a two or four-year institution for two or more years, the One-Year Absence Provision would still apply.

- 4. DISCONTINUED SPORT:** The NLI is declared null and void if the signing institution discontinues the prospective student-athlete's sport. The prospective student-athlete is permitted to sign another NLI in the same signing year as an exception to the one valid NLI provision when the sport is discontinued.
- 5. RECRUITING RULES VIOLATION:** If a prospective student-athlete's eligibility requires reinstatement by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff due to NCAA and/or conference recruiting rules violations, the institution must notify the signee that they have an option to have the NLI declared null and void due to the rules violation. It is the prospective student-athlete's decision to have the NLI remain binding or to have the NLI declared null and void, permitting the prospective student-athlete to be recruited and not be subject to NLI penalties. An institution must notify the prospective student-athletes within five business days that they have an option related to their NLI status. The institution should also notify the prospective student-athlete that they have 14 days to respond.

**Reminder:** The need for this action would only occur if the prospective student-athlete signed an NLI and later the institution discovered the rules violation that required the prospective student-athlete's reinstatement. If the NCAA rules violation occurred before the prospective student-athlete signs an NLI, the prospective student-athlete must be reinstated before signing an NLI.

**NOTIFICATION OF NULL AND VOID:** The NLI signing institution must notify a prospective student-athlete in writing that his or her NLI is null and void within five business days from when the institution is made aware of the status of the NLI. It is expected that institutions are appropriately submitting null and voids through the NLI Portal. If an NLI is determined to be null and void, the signing institution (not the conference) must submit a request to null and void the NLI using the NLI portal. The null and void instructions are located in the NLI Resources in the NLI portal.

If an institution has knowledge that a signee should not have his or her NLI declared null and void, the NLI office should be notified. Examples may include the prospective student-athlete with a pending certification decision taking an additional core course and/or taking an additional SAT/ACT exam prior to the opening day of class.

### **NLI STATUS – BINDING NLI VERSUS NULL AND VOID NLI:**

If the prospective student-athlete is eligible at the signing institution and does not report for preseason practice or fall enrollment, the NLI remains binding.

If the prospective student-athlete is eligible at the signing institution and quits the team, the NLI remains binding even if the athletics aid is cancelled per NCAA rules.

If the prospective student-athlete does not complete the admission or NCAA Eligibility Center process, the NLI remains binding.

If the prospective student-athlete signs a professional contract, the NLI remains binding. The prospective student-athlete would have eligibility remaining in other sports which binds him/her to the institution, not a specific sport.

If the prospective student-athlete has amateurism issues, the NLI remains binding. The prospective student-athlete may be eligible for athletics aid unless stated on the athletics aid agreement that the prospective student-athlete must be eligible for competition to receive the athletics aid. If athletics aid is not permitted, the NLI is declared null and void.

**MISCONDUCT/CRIMINAL ISSUES:** If an NLI signee is engaged in misconduct or criminal activities warranting the cancellation of athletics aid, per the conditions written in the institution's athletics aid agreement, the NLI would be declared null and void upon the cancellation of athletics aid.

### **NLI RELEASE:**

**PROCESSING THE NLI RELEASE REQUEST:** An NLI Release Request must be initiated by the NLI signee by submitting the NLI Release Request located on the NLI website. NLI signees enter the release with a secured username and password, the same for entering their NCAA Eligibility Center account.

After logging in, NLI signees will complete the information needed to request the release. The release request is submitted online to the director of athletics and compliance administrator with notification by email. Email addresses are pulled from the NCAA Membership Directory; therefore, it is important for member institutions to keep the director of athletics and senior compliance administrator email updated. The release request completed by member institutions is secured in the NLI portal.

The director of athletics (or designee) must mark one of the release options and submit the release request to the NLI Office through the NLI Portal. The release request decision will remain PENDING / NLI

**RECRUITING BAN LIFTED** when the institution submits the release to the NLI office. Once the NLI office verifies the release request, the notification will be sent electronically to the student with notification also to the institution that the release decision is posted.

The signee's NLI release status and the release form in a pdf are visible to all member institutions in the NLI portal. If a complete release is granted, once the release status is visible on the portal, another institution that may have interest in recruiting the prospective student-athlete may do so.

**30-DAY DEADLINE:** This release request form must be returned to the NLI office no more than 30 days from the date submitted by the student. The NLI release will be granted by the NLI Office if the release request form is not returned by the deadline (30 days). However, please note this is not an automatic complete release if not received by the 30-day deadline. The NLI office must determine why the institution did not respond to the release request before any action is taken. If circumstances exist preventing the institution to respond within the designated timeframe, an extension may be requested to the NLI Office.

**RECRUITING BAN LIFTED:** Once an NLI signee submits an NLI release request online, the NLI Recruiting Ban will be lifted allowing a signee to communicate with other coaches and prohibiting an institution from blocking such communication. Contact with coaches is permissible without granting a Complete Release. If the signee has triggered transfer student-athlete status, notification of transfer in the transfer portal applies and not the NLI Recruiting Ban.

**REASON FOR RELEASE REQUEST:** The NLI signee must state the reason for the NLI release request.

**REASON FOR DENYING THE RELEASE:** The institution must state the reason for denial of the NLI release request.

**COMPLETE RELEASE DECISION:** If an NLI signee is granted a complete release, they are not subject to the NLI penalty. A complete release permits the student-athlete to practice, receive athletics aid and compete at another NLI member institution.

**COMPLETE RELEASE – DIVISION I EXCEPTION:** The NLI signee would be granted a complete release, if requested by the signee, under the following conditions: (1) the signee is enrolled at the signing institution during the summer triggering transfer status; and (2) the head coach departs during the summer and before the start of the next regular academic term (e.g., fall semester). The signee would submit an NLI release request through the normal NLI release process. The institution would grant the complete release through the NLI portal.

**NO RELEASE DECISION:** If an NLI signee was not granted a complete release (no release decision) and will be attending another NLI member institution, they are not under the NLI recruiting ban; however, the signee is subject to the NLI penalty of losing a season of competition and serving one academic year in residence. Practice and athletics aid are permissible.

**OPTION TO CHANGE THE RELEASE DECISION:** After an institution issues a No Release decision, that decision can be changed to a Complete Release. If an institution wants to change the NLI release decision, the compliance office should contact the NLI office. With this request, the NLI signee's release record will be withdrawn, and the signee must resubmit their release request again for an updated institutional decision.

**RELEASE REQUEST - CANCELING ATHLETICS AID:** If a prospective student-athlete requests an NLI release and it is granted, the prospective student-athlete has voluntarily withdrawn from attending the institution. Thus, the aid agreement can be cancelled per NCAA rules. If the institution determines a

no release decision, the NLI signee could decide to attend the signing institution since the institution will not grant a complete release. The athletics aid must be available if the signee decides to attend the signing institution. Institution must adhere to NCAA procedures for cancelling athletics aid.

**RELEASE AGREEMENT:** NLI member institutions are prohibited from establishing any additional conditions associated with the NLI agreement in advance of a prospective student-athlete signing the NLI. Should an institution and/or its staff members offer additional conditions, the prospective student-athlete's NLI is subject to being declared null and void along with possible institutional penalties as determined by the NLI Policy and Review Committee.

**NON-NLI MEMBERS:** An NLI complete release is not necessary for a prospective student-athlete attending a non-NLI member institution. A non-NLI member institution is permitted to recruit a prospective student-athlete after they sign an NLI. Additionally, the NLI signee is not subject to the NLI penalty at a non-NLI member institution.

## **APPEALS:**

**APPEALING A "NO RELEASE" DECISION:** When an institution does not release a prospective student-athlete from his or her NLI obligation, the prospective student-athlete may appeal the decision within 30 days of the institution's "No Release" by filing an appeal with the NLI Policy and Review

Committee or the Division II Review Committee. Once a prospective student-athlete's appeal is received in the NLI Portal, the signing institution will be notified and will have the opportunity to provide its facts related to the no release decision.

NLI signees are notified in writing regarding the committee's decision on their appeal. The appeal process can take up to six to eight weeks. Appeal decisions of the Committee may be appealed for a second appeal opportunity to the Division I or II NLI Appeals Committee. These decisions are final and binding.

If a prospective student-athlete wishes to appeal the NLI Committee's no release decision, the appeal must be made within 30 days of the date on the decision letter sent from the NLI office.

An institution does not have the right to appeal a decision of the NLI Policy and 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 NLI program or the Collegiate Commissioners Association.

## **TWO-YEAR COLLEGE TRANSFERS:**

**TWO-YEAR COLLEGE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT:** A prospective student-athlete needs to graduate from a two-year college if:

- 1) The prospective student-athlete must graduate to fulfill NCAA 2-4 transfer requirements; or
- 2) The prospective student-athlete has a previously signed NLI that is still binding. In this case, the previous NLI is satisfied if they graduate from the two-year college.

**FAILURE TO GRADUATE:** If a prospective student-athlete is required to graduate from the two-year college to satisfy the NLI agreement and does not graduate from the two-year college, the current NLI signed while attending the two-year college will be declared null and void.

**MIDYEAR FOOTBALL TRANSFER STUDENT-ATHLETES:** A midyear two-year college football transfer student-athlete who fails to graduate from a two-year college would maintain a valid NLI provided they were a Division I qualifier or a Division II transfer student-athlete.

**DIVISION I TWO-YEAR COLLEGE TRANSFER, NONQUALIFIER:** A Division I 2-4 transfer student-athlete, nonqualifier, in his or her first year of enrollment at a two-year 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. Thus, the NLI would be deemed invalid by the conference office.

### **ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:**

**NLI POLICY VIOLATIONS:** Any NLI policy violations must be reported to the NLI office through the NLI Portal, not through RSRO. Facts associated with the violation can be submitted through the NLI Portal. Examples of NLI violations are: NLI recruiting ban or signing of four-year college transfers. Once the facts are reviewed, the institution will receive notification of the violation and any corrective actions.

**COMPETITION WHILE SERVING THE NLI PENALTY:** An institution is not permitted to have a student-athlete participate in competition while serving the NLI penalty. Once the NLI office is aware of the NLI violation of competing while serving the NLI penalty, the institution will receive a request from the Committee for the institution's explanation. Based on the facts, the Committee has the authority to suspend NLI signings for the upcoming signing period in that institution's respective sport. The penalty will not result in vacating wins and will not require student-athlete reinstatement. The student-athlete will be withheld from competition to continue serving the NLI penalty. Additionally, the institution will be fined \$500 and issued a letter of reprimand.

**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.

**DELIVERY OF THE NLI:** Per NCAA Divisions I and II rules, any in-person, off-campus contact made by an institution's athletics department personnel with a prospective student-athlete for the purposes of signing an NLI or attendance at activities related to the signing of an NLI, shall be prohibited. Further, per NCAA Divisions I and II rules, in-person, off-campus delivery of an NLI by an institutional staff member shall be prohibited. It is permissible for on-campus delivery and/or receipt of an NLI during an official or unofficial visit provided it is not a recruiting dead period and all other applicable NCAA rules are followed. The NLI may be delivered and/or received by express mail, courier service, regular mail, fax, electronic mail or mobile application.

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

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

**STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS:** The NLI is in full force and effect for a period of four years, commencing with the date of the prospective student-athlete's signature on the NLI. Therefore, if a prospective student-athlete is subject to the NLI penalty, once four years has elapsed and the signee has not enrolled at an NLI member institution, the NLI is no longer binding. For example, an NLI signed on May 1, 2024, would expire on May 2, 2028, so the prospective student-athlete would not be subject to the NLI penalty after the elapsed four years.

**OTHER LETTER OF INTENT PROGRAMS:** A letter of intent signed with a junior college, NCAA Division III, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) institution or any other association, does not apply to NCAA Divisions I and II members participating in the NLI program.

**NON-NLI MEMBERS:** Institutions that are not members of the NLI program are not required to comply with NLI regulations. Thus, a prospective student-athlete who signs an NLI would not be subject to the NLI penalty if they later attend a non-NLI member institution. Further, a non-NLI member institution is permitted to continue to recruit a prospective student-athlete after they sign an NLI. If the NLI signee later transfers to an institution participating in the NLI program, the NLI penalty would be applied at the NLI member institution.

**For additional NLI resources, visit the NLI website: [www.nationalletter.org](http://www.nationalletter.org) and the NLI Resources in the NLI Portal.**

