

INTERNATIONAL CARDING SCHEME GUIDELINE NOTES FOR ATHLETES 2009

This paper summarises key points in the full Operational Guidelines Document, which is attached. It is not meant to be a stand-alone document, rather a summary of points, which are detailed in the full document. References are made to the appropriate sections in the full document and it is the responsibility of the Athletes to ensure that they have read the full text of the guidelines.

1. Introduction

- The Carding Scheme is aimed at supporting Irish Athletes who have the proven potential to reach finals and win medals at Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Benefits for Carded Athletes include credits for sports science/medicine support services (up to €3,000), provided through the NCTC.
- General living expenses are paid directly to Carded Athletes in the Contracted, World Class and International categories.
- Developmental and Junior Carded Athletes will receive financial support through enhanced NGB squad programmes.

2. Ethos

- Athletes must achieve performance targets to qualify for the scheme and continue to show progression year on year e.g. at major international events, to remain on the scheme.
- The Carding Scheme is strictly for Athletes who accept and live by a drugs free lifestyle.

3. Eligibility

- Applications for the Carding Scheme require Athletes to have achieved the performance criteria, which the NGB has agreed with the Irish Institute of Sport (IIS).
- All application forms must be endorsed by the NGB.
- The Developmental category is normally for athletes under the age of 23 years, unless otherwise stated in the criteria
- In exceptional circumstances, Athletes just failing to achieve the required target, and with a proven track record may be considered for Carding.

4. Sports specific criteria

- There are 5 general classification categories used to determine the levels of support. They are:

Contracted Athletes – World Class – International – Developmental Squad – Junior Squad

- Athletes applying for the 2009 Carding Scheme in the International, Developmental and junior categories must have achieved the performance criteria in 2008.
- Contracted and World Class Athletes must have achieved the criteria during the previous two years, i.e. 2007 or 2008.

5. Pro Rata Awards

- Athletes achieving the qualifying criteria performance between 1st January and 30th September 2009 may apply for financial assistance and support services on a pro rata basis.
- Applications for such pro rata grants must be received by the IIS within four weeks of the date of performance.

6. Application Process and Monitoring

- NGB to send forms to Athletes on their achieving the required performance target.
- Athletes complete the form and return to the NGB, with training and competition programmes specified to be agreed with the NGB
- The completed application form is sent to the IIS for approval and actioning.
- Any alterations to the training and/or competition programme must be agreed in advance by the NGB and IIS.
- Monitoring of the Athlete's progress against targets is made against the seven headings detailed in the full Guidelines document (Page 4), at quarterly meetings between the NGB and the IIS.
- Should progress be satisfactory, carding benefits will continue. If not, the athlete could be sent a letter of warning or their carding benefits suspended.

7. Target Setting

- Progress will be assessed against the targets specified in the application form. Funding is provided to support athletes and help them follow outlined programmes.
- There should be clear progression from the previous years in terms of performance targets achieved.

8. Five Year Rule

- The IIS may review the eligibility of Athletes who have received Carding benefits for a period of five years, which do not have to be consecutive.
- The review could result in an Athlete's Carding support being stopped.
- An Athlete has the right to appeal in any such circumstances.

9. Direct – financial support

- Details of the financial support available are outlined in Appendix 1 of the full Guidelines document.
- Grants are allocated on a case-by-case basis and there is no guarantee that the maximum level of funding will be allocated to any Athlete.
- Grant aid for the International, World Class and contracted categories in the 2009 scheme will be paid directly into Athletes bank accounts on a quarterly basis.
- Developmental and Junior category athletes receive funding through their NGB enhanced squad programme, on a quarterly basis. Team allocations will also be made to NGBs.
- Governing bodies have the right to decide the precise ways the junior and Developmental/ team awards will be used to enhance their squad programmes.
- The following are the payment dates for 2009: (NGB/IIS quarterly meetings will precede these payment dates)

1st payment – April
2nd payment – July
3rd payment – October
4th payment – December

- Funding awarded to athletes to assist them with general living and competition expenses does not have to be receipted to the IIS.
- They may be a tax liability incurred by the athlete receiving such income and it is the responsibility of the athlete to contact their tax authority.

10. Performance Incentive Payment

- Athletes in the Developmental, International, World Class and Contracted categories may receive a Performance Incentive Payment (PIP). The performance target to be achieved will be negotiated by the NGB with the IIS and be included in the sports specific criteria. The PIP can only be achieved once per year.
- Payments to Developmental squad members will be made directly to the NGB, who should then pay the athlete. In other categories, the PIP is paid directly to athletes' bank accounts.

11. Income Tax Liability

- It is the responsibility of the Athlete to satisfy the Revenue Commissioners regarding the nature of such expenses.
- It should be noted that the portion of the Grant awarded in respect of “general living expenses” might be regarded as income.

12. Tax Clearance Procedures

- Regardless of personal tax circumstances, all athletes in receipt of a direct payment grant of €10,000 or more are required to produce a valid Tax Clearance Certificate. It is the responsibility of the athlete and not the IIS to ensure this is sent in to coincide with payment dates.
- Details on how to apply for a tax clearance certificate are outlined in the carding scheme guidelines.

13. Non Financial Support

- All Carded athletes are eligible for a range of non-financial support.
- These services are outlined in the guidelines and are co-ordinated by the NCTC.
- The range of sports science and medical support services available are listed on pages 8 and 9 of the full Guidelines document.
- These services are in addition to the NGB's sports science and medical support programmes.
- It should be noted that a medical screening for all Carded athletes is a condition of participation in the scheme.
- It is important that access to the additional support services benefits is through the NCTC and delivered by their approved providers.
- A series of educational workshops will be agreed in advance with the NGB and notification sent direct to athletes.
- Each Carded athlete may spend up to two weeks free of charge per year preparing/training at the NCTC's Limerick base.

14. Application procedure

- The IIS will distribute the application forms to all NGBs.
- Athletes are advised to submit their applications in good time and are required to sign-off their application forms by hand.
- Late applications will be dealt with on a pro rata basis for the current year.
- All Carded athletes are required to submit their whereabouts form with their Carding application, or as specified by the Irish Sports Council's (ISC) anti-doping unit.
- No funding will be given without the ISC being in receipt of the whereabouts form.
- An athlete achieving the qualification for a specific category within any carding year will remain in that category for the remainder of the year.

15. Appeals Process

- Athletes may appeal against decisions made by the Irish Institute of Sport (IIS) in respect of the International Carding Scheme.
- Such appeals must be made on the appropriate Application Appeal Form.
- The Review Committee is an independent body, which will adjudicate on such appeals.
- An athlete has the right to request a hearing before the Review Committee.

16. Administration

- Payments will be made on a quarterly basis to NGBs and athletes as per the requirements and procedures detailed on page 10 of the Guidelines document.
- Payments will be made on a quarterly basis to NGBs and athletes following the satisfactory outcome of the quarterly meeting.
- The completion and submission of a current, comprehensive and accurate whereabouts form is required on a quarterly basis by the ISC Anti Doping Unit, as outlined on page 10.
- Tax details need to be submitted as required.
- Training and competition programmes, as agreed with the NGB and detailed in the application form, should be followed.
- A medical screening with a designated member of their NGB Medical Team or NCTC is a requirement.
- Attendance at the NCTC organised workshop for Carded Athletes living in Ireland is a requirement.

17. Amendments

- The IIS retains the right to amend or evoke the rules of the scheme as may be thought fit.

18. Conditions of Participation

- It is the responsibility of all athletes to ensure that they are conversant with pages 12 and 13 of the Guidelines document.
- Carded athletes are required to comply with and be bound by the rules of the Irish Anti-Doping Rules.
- Yearly training and competition plans should be agreed with the NGB and be included in the Carding application form.
- All Carded athletes are required to participate in the National Championships, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Where required, Carded athletes should support agreed NGB and IIS media events.
- Where an NGB has a Code of Conduct in place, all Carded athletes are required to sign and abide by the requirements identified.
- Carded athletes are required to accept the jurisdiction and rulings of the Irish Sports Council in all anti-doping matters as specified in the Guidelines document.