



Quest for Gold
Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
2019-2020 Guidelines for PSO/MSOs

This document outlines the administration of *Quest for Gold* 'Ontario Cards' only. Using the mailing list provided by Sport Canada, MHSTCI will forward application information directly to those Ontario athletes currently carded by Sport Canada who may be eligible for a 'Canada Card'. PSO/MSOs are encouraged to contact their NSO or MHSTCI to confirm the names of athletes who have been sent this information.

Please direct all *Quest for Gold* OAAP inquiries to:

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Electronic Funds Transfer for Athlete Payments

Athletes are encouraged to apply for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to receive payment electronically rather than as a hard copy cheque. This will significantly decrease the time it takes you to receive payment and eliminate the potential for cheques lost or sent to a former address.

The EFT application instructions will be sent to all athletes with the QFG Application Form. Athletes will need to submit this form online, attaching a scanned copy of a void cheque or a bank letter showing the bank account details.

**Ministry of Heritage,
Sport, Tourism and
Culture Industries**

**Ministère des Industries du
patrimoine, du sport, du
tourisme et de la culture**



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March 2, 2020

Dear PSO/MSO Contact

Re: Administration of the 2019-2020 Ontario Card - Quest for Gold - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP)

Quest for Gold's overarching goal is to increase the performance and number of Ontario athletes competing at the highest national and international levels, thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions. I want to thank your organization in advance for once again operating the Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (QFG-OAAP).

Please note there will be no change to the program in 2019-20. Program materials required to operate the Ontario Card program are attached to this email. Please submit all program requirements, as detailed in the attached materials, to Scott Cooper, at scott.cooper@ontario.ca, who continues to lead this program for the Division.

Your feedback is important to us as we continue to develop a new Sport Action Plan to better support athletes across the province.

Thank you for your continued efforts. I wish you every success in your activities and competitions in the coming year.

Best regards,

Steve Harlow
Assistant Deputy Minister

Program Overview – Quest for Gold Ontario Athlete Assistance Program

- What are the goals and objectives of the Quest for Gold - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP)?
- How will the Quest for Gold - OAAP achieve its objectives?
- How will direct financial assistance be provided to Ontario athletes?
- What are the eligible expenses that a carded athlete can spend funding on obtained through the Quest for Gold - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program?
- Are Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program grants considered “income” under the Federal Income Tax Act?
- Payments for the 2019-2020 Quest for Gold – OAAP

1. What are the goals and objectives of the *Quest for Gold* - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program?

The overarching goal of the Quest for Gold – OAAP is directly related to the High Performance Sport goal of the Canadian Sport Policy – that Canadians are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition – by improving the performance and number of Ontario athletes performing at the national and international level; thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions. Specific objectives of the program are:

- a) To help athletes continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition;
- b) To encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train;
- c) To compensate athletes for earnings lost while training;
- d) To enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals;
- e) To increase athlete access to improved high performance coaching; and
- f) To enhance training and competitive opportunities available to athletes.

2. How will the Quest for Gold - OAAP achieve its objectives?

The *Quest for Gold* - OAAP achieves its objectives by:

- Providing additional direct financial assistance (Canada Card designation) to Ontario athletes who are carded at the national level by Sport Canada;
- Providing standards for the identification and support of eligible sports and eligible junior-aged Ontario athletes to be carded at the Provincial level (Ontario Card);
- Ensuring that Provincial Sport and Multi-Sport Organizations (PSO/MSOs) have appropriate selection procedures and criteria in place, for the nomination of Ontario athletes to be carded at the Provincial level (Ontario Card);
- Providing OAAP carding support in a consistent and timely manner to athletes who meet their sport-specific carding criteria in those sports that meet OAAP eligibility requirements;
- Focusing support on junior-aged athletes to assist in their transition from junior to senior national and international competition;
- Providing a living and training allowance to help offset some of the costs athletes incur as a result of their involvement in high-performance sport;
- Allowing financial assistance provided to be used to offset tuition costs to allow athletes to attain academic goals;
- Ensuring, in conjunction with the PSO/MSO, that appropriate training and competitive opportunities are in place and providing annual, ongoing and long-term evaluation of athlete performance and potential.

3. How will direct financial assistance be provided to Ontario athletes?

Direct financial assistance will be provided to eligible Ontario athletes in the form of a living and training allowance. Assistance will be provided through two carding designations – Canada Card and Ontario Card.

Canada Card - Eligibility is limited to Ontario athletes who are carded by Sport Canada. The Canada Card will provide additional funding over and above the full value of the carding designation the athlete is receiving from Sport Canada – the actual value of the card is dependent on funding available and the number of athletes awarded a Canada Card.

Ontario Card - Ontario Card will provide direct financial assistance to Ontario junior-aged athletes identified by PSO/MSOs. The Ministry will also consider Ontario Card designation for some senior-aged ParaSport/Paralympic athletes and able bodied athletes in certain circumstances – See page 14. The actual value of the card is dependent on funding available and the number of athletes awarded an Ontario Card.

Note: “Junior-aged athlete” is defined by the Ministry as those athletes who fall within the eligible age range for the Canada Games - 11 to 22 years of age. PSO/MSOs are free to set age groupings that fit within the Ministry criteria based on existing sport-specific age/discipline categories. A PSO/MSO with a NSO-approved Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTADM) that identifies older athletes in the “Train to Train” and “Train to Compete” categories may apply to MHSTCI for a variation to this 11-22 age range.

A PSO/MSO may choose to allocate a maximum of 30% of its carding allotment to athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO’s selection process.

For example, these junior-aged athletes would ordinarily compete in one of the following developmental categories:

- a) National Junior Team/ National Junior Development Team or Training pool;
- b) Canada Games level; or
- c) Provincial age group/ Elite club/ Ontario Games level.

An Athlete with a Disability (AWAD) is defined as an athlete nominated by a PSO/MSO that is recognized by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries as being responsible for governance of a particular Paralympic sport.

Both the sport and athlete eligibility criteria must be met before financial assistance can be awarded to any athlete.

4. What are the eligible expenses that a carded athlete can spend funding on obtained through the *Quest for Gold* - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program?

Carded athletes receiving funding under the Ontario Athlete Assistance Program can spend funding obtained only on the following items:

- Normal living costs;
- Costs directly associated with training (e.g. coaching, facility fees, other athlete services);
- Costs associated with attending training camps and competitions (e.g. entry fees, travel costs);
- Sport-specific equipment; and
- Tuition and education related expenses (e.g. books, fees, commuting costs).

5. Are Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program grants considered “income” under the Federal Income Tax Act?

Athletes who receive an OAAP grant will not be issued a T4A form.

The CRA has advised that the benefits received from the *Quest for Gold* – OAAP Program are generally to be received by recipients tax free within the meaning of the *Federal Income Tax Act*.

If OAAP-funded athletes have any questions regarding their personal tax situation, they should contact the CRA at 1-800-267-6999 or online at www.cra-arc.gc.ca

6. Payments for the 2019-2020 Quest for Gold - OAAP

For 2019-2020 eligible athletes will receive carding status for one carding year starting from April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020. The amount of total payment to eligible athletes will be determined at a later date, once the total quantity of eligible athletes is known.

Minimum Sport and Athlete Eligibility Requirements – Ontario Cards

- What are the Minimum Eligibility Requirements and Responsibilities for Provincial and Multi-Sport Organizations?
- What are the Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Athletes?

1. What are the minimum eligibility requirements and responsibilities for Provincial Sport and Multi-Sport Organizations?

General Sport Eligibility Criteria:

- Sport must have a Provincial Sport Organization / Multi-Sport Organization (PSO/MSO) that is formally recognized by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries as per the MHSTCI's *Sport Recognition Policy*.
- Sport and sport discipline must have been, or must be a participant in the regular program of at least one of :
 - i. 2020 Olympic / Paralympic Summer Games or 2022 Olympic /Paralympic Winter Games;
 - ii. 2021 Canada Summer Games or 2023 Canada Winter Games;
 - iii. Those sports eligible to participate in the Ontario (Youth) Games who also meet the following criteria:
 - the sport's NSO is financially supported by Sport Canada as a result of the implementation of the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF);
 - the sport has a sanctioned World Championship, World Cup or equivalent championship that is held at least every other year;
 - the sport's NSO has a clearly articulated national team program with appropriate training and competitive opportunities for which provincial level athletes are training to qualify for; and
 - the PSO/MSO must also complete the *PSO/MSO Provincial High Performance Program Questionnaire* (available from MHSTCI) to the satisfaction of MHSTCI to confirm that the PSO/MSO has an ongoing, high-performance training program in place.
- The sport must have a sanctioned provincial and national championship that is held at least biennially.
- If the PSO/MSO has not already provided the following materials to the MHSTCI, in accordance with the terms of the 2019-20 PSO/MSO Ontario Amateur Sport Fund Transfer Payment Agreement:
 - a valid certificate of insurance, and
 - minutes of the PSO/MSO's most recent Annual General Meeting,it will submit a copy of these materials when it returns a signed copy of the Quest for Gold Agreement to the MHSTCI.
- The PSO/MSO must demonstrate that they have a clearly articulated junior-aged provincial level program ("junior-aged" refers to chronological age, not a sport's specific age category)

with appropriate training and competitive opportunities for each of the proposed carded athletes.

- The PSO/MSO's junior-aged provincial level program must be based on ongoing training principles that include significant daily training activities.
- The PSO/MSO must demonstrate how they formally monitor and evaluate the training of athletes and competitive programs.

Note: Organizations that did not participate in the 2018-2019 *Quest for Gold* - OAAP will be required to complete the *PSO/MSO Provincial High Performance Program Questionnaire* (available from MHSTCI) to demonstrate compliance with the above criteria. MHSTCI uses the *High Performance Questionnaire* to confirm that a PSO/MSO has an ongoing, high-performance training program in place.

- The PSO/MSO must conduct a formal process for nominating athletes for Ontario Cards. Rules and procedures must be published and made known to all concerned, along with procedures for appealing decisions. These procedures are provided to PSO/MSOs starting on page 21 of these guidelines.
- The PSO/MSO must have in place a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement signed by each individual athlete who is being nominated for an Ontario Card. The Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement must contain in writing the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the athlete and the PSO/MSO.

2. What are the minimum eligibility requirements for athletes?

- Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident (previously defined as a 'Landed Immigrant').
- Athlete must be a permanent resident of Ontario **for one year prior** to his/her nomination for carding status. This date will be set as 365 days prior to the due date for the PSO to publish the Draft List of Nominations, as listed on page 63.
- Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario.

Exceptions to these criteria, known as a "Residency Exception" will be considered **on a case specific basis by the PSO/MSO Selection Committee** provided that the athlete can substantiate in writing at the time of application/Residency Exception submission deadline their reason for living outside Ontario, as detailed below.

Residency Exception:

The PSO Selection Committee may grant a Residency Exception for an athlete if the athlete provides information to show one of the following:

- (a) He/She cannot receive the required level of training in Ontario and is out of the province **temporarily** during the year (i.e. due to lack of facilities, coaching, and competitions);
- (b) He/She must attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province either because the course of study is not offered by an Ontario institution; **or**
- (c) It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province, or other extenuating circumstances that require the athlete to be out of the province.

The onus is on the athlete to demonstrate that he/she needs to be out-of-province for one of the above reasons. **The athlete must submit written documentation to their PSO/MSO's Selection Committee by the posted deadline, clearly indicating how they meet a residency exception(s).** As a Residency Exception is still subject to Appeal by another athlete during the Appeals Process, it is essential that all Selection Committee decisions are based on a documented submission by the athlete, the content of which will be used in the "PSO Response" to any such Appeal.

Athletes applying for a Residency Exception related to exception (a) above, who are training at an NSO-approved National Training Centre MUST include a letter from the NSO outlining their support for the athlete, the progress the athlete is making and the athlete's potential to make the national team level.

Length of time living outside Ontario:

Athletes living outside Ontario for more than **30 consecutive days** within the ministry fiscal year 2019-2020 for athletic or academic purposes must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO Selection Committee, that appropriate training programs are in place and are being monitored by the PSO/MSO.

The onus is on the athlete to:

1. Provide a written plan outlining their training and competition plans to the PSO/MSO prior to their departure from Ontario, as part of their Residency Exception request; and
2. Adhere to the PSO/MSO-approved competition and training plan throughout the carding cycle. At a minimum, this requires regular (PSO/MSO to define frequency and method in their Selection Criteria) contact by the athlete with the PSO/MSO (PSO/MSO to define who to contact); and
3. Submit regular (PSO/MSO to define frequency) training logs to the PSO/MSO to track progress against the PSO/MSO-approved competition and training plan.

Athletes who were formally invited to and are currently participating in their NSO's national team training program are exempt from this requirement.

PSO/MSOs should not discourage an athlete from submitting this documentation, despite situations of regular athlete-PSO/MSO communications. A documented paper trail from the athlete is required should the athlete's residency exception be challenged in an appeal from another athlete.

Residency Exemption for Military Families: The one-year Ontario residency requirement is waived for any Ontario Card or Canada Card applicant who is a spouse or dependant of a Regular Force member of the Canadian Forces or Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service. This means that eligible military family members now qualify for OAAP funding immediately upon becoming residents of Ontario. Please see page 19 of these Guidelines for details of this exemption, including a list of documents needed to verify eligibility for this waiver of the one-year Ontario residency requirement.

Minimum eligibility requirements for athletes – continued:

- Athletes who have achieved Canada Card status are not eligible for an Ontario Card in the same fiscal year;
- Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and NSO where applicable;
- Athlete must have entered into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with his or her PSO/MSO and must be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement;
- Athlete must have met all terms and conditions of any previous *Quest for Gold* Sports Organization – Athlete Agreements to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO in order to be eligible for consideration in 2019-2020;
- Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program;
- Athlete’s coach should be minimum Level 2 NCCP certified or trained status Competition Stream or the sport’s equivalent in the Instruction Stream, or be engaged in completing this training, as determined by the PSO;
- Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy;
- Athlete must be attending an educational institution full-time (i.e. elementary and secondary schools):
 - Exceptions will be made provided that the athlete can substantiate that his/her training will not allow for full-time attendance or if an athlete requires special needs that preclude full or part-time attendance (e.g. Athlete with a Disability (AWAD));
- Athletes who have completed their area of study at the secondary level (i.e. high school) or post-secondary level and who continue to train towards participation in major national or international competitions will also be considered;
- If eligible, the athlete must compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario and/or Canada for one year from the date of the Minister’s letter informing the athlete of acceptance into OAAP program, at Canada Games and other national competitions involving provincial level competitions;
- Athlete must not receive financial support from any other provincial/territorial athlete assistance program. This does not include academic scholarships, bursaries, student grants, student loans, social assistance, disability pensions, and other forms of financial assistance that are unrelated to competitive sport.
- Eligibility will be limited to Ontario junior-aged athletes, ages 11-22 (“junior-aged” refers to chronological age, not a sport’s specific age category) - only exception is for PSO/MSOs using 30% of Ontario Card allotment for athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO’s selection process.

Age of athletes:

The primary purpose of the Ontario Card designation is to provide direct financial assistance to “junior-aged” high performance athletes. Age criterion is different for able bodied athletes and AWAD athletes.

Able Bodied Athletes:

A minimum of 70% of a PSO/MSO's Ontario Card allotment must be distributed to junior-aged athletes (11 to 22 years of age) in able bodied sports. A PSO/MSO may choose to allocate a maximum of 30% of its carding allotment to athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO's selection process.

- To be deemed a potential next generation national team athlete, in the year following receipt of Ontario Card funding the athlete must not surpass the maximum age limit for national team qualification. Example: If an NSO has a rule which states national team athletes must not exceed 30 years of age, an athlete that turns 30 during the fiscal year April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 would not be eligible for an Ontario Card in fiscal year April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

Athletes with a Disability (AWAD):

The Ministry recognizes that junior/developmental level ParaSport/Paralympic athletes are generally older than those in able bodied sports. This recognition is supported by detailed study of AWAD development models as reflected in *No Accidental Champions*, the LTADM for Athletes with a Disability. Therefore, the age guidelines for Ontario Cards for AWAD are different from able bodied athletes. In 2019-2020 the following guidelines will apply for the nomination of eligible AWAD for Ontario Cards:

- Paralympic sports in Canada Games - Must use Canada Games technical package guidelines (maximum age of 24 years old).
- Non-Canada Games Paralympic sports - no specific age limit but the PSO/MSO must demonstrate that the athlete being nominated has been identified as having real potential to get to the national team level (i.e. the athlete must be identified by NSO or through the PSO High Performance identification process).

3. What if athletes are under the age of 18?

All athletes under the age of 18 must have their parent or legal guardian sign their OAAP application form. Cheques will be processed in the name of the eligible athlete.

4. What about professional / semi-professional athletes or athletes who have normal living and training costs covered?

Athletes who receive funding that covers the full amount of their living expenses and training costs or who have received funding in excess of normal living and training costs through exercising their skills as a professional or semi-professional athlete, or have these costs covered by virtue of involvement on a team through a formal agreement, within the same sport as the one for which they wish to receive OAAP funding, will not be eligible for OAAP support. The onus is on the athlete to prove that he/she meets the eligibility requirements.

5. Can an athlete be nominated for Ontario Card status in two sports? (i.e. receive two cards)?

No. If an athlete is nominated in two separate sports the athlete will have to decide which sport he/she wishes to receive carding support from.

6. Does the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries require receipts from the carded athletes?

The terms and conditions of the *Quest for Gold* Program (contained within athlete application) require athlete recipients to retain all records and documents related to the grant (e.g. receipts) for a three-year period and must make them available for inspection by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries when requested. The PSO/MSO may also request receipts on a routine basis if this requirement is stipulated in the Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement.

Carded athletes receiving funding under the *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program can spend funding obtained on the following expenses incurred by the carded athlete:

- a. Normal living costs;
- b. Costs directly associated with training (e.g. coaching, facility fees, other athlete services);
- c. Costs associated with attending training camps and competitions (e.g. entry fees, travel costs);
- d. Sport specific equipment;
- e. Tuition and education related expenses (e.g. books, fees, commuting costs).

7. If a sport has a number of disciplines that meet the general sport eligibility criteria does the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries designate cards towards each discipline within that sport?

No, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries will not be designating cards towards each discipline within a sport.

For those PSO/MSOs that have a number of disciplines that meet the general sport eligibility criteria, it is up to the individual PSO/MSO to develop the Sport Specific Athlete Selection Criteria (see page 30) and nominate their athletes within their various disciplines and distribute their allotment of cards accordingly.

8. If a sport doesn't have enough high performance athletes to fill the carding allotment, what happens to the cards that are not used?

Sport organizations should only be carding athletes that are in a high performance program and that have been identified as next generation senior team national athletes (see minimum eligibility requirements for athletes – previously in this section). If a PSO/MSO does not have enough high performance calibre athletes to use its total allotment of Ontario Cards, it should not award them to athletes who are not participating in the sport's high performance program.

Unused Ontario Cards will not be allotted to other sports. The number of Ontario Cards distributed will decrease, thereby increasing the monetary value of the Ontario Cards awarded to all other eligible athletes.

9. Does a PSO/MSO's Ontario Card allotment include the cards for Sport Canada-Carded athletes?

No. If an athlete is carded by Sport Canada, is a permanent resident of Ontario, or has had the one-year residency requirement waived because he/she is a member of a military family (see page 19) and their sport meets the MHSTCI general sport eligibility criteria, they will be eligible to apply for a Canada Card. It is a completely separate allotment from the Ontario Card. If a PSO/MSO Selection Committee is uncertain which athletes are in receipt of Sport Canada Carding, this information can be obtained from MHSTCI staff or their NSO.

10. Is an athlete previously funded by Sport Canada eligible for an Ontario Card?

An athlete who received Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program carding during any part of MHSTCI's fiscal year April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 and/or any part of fiscal year April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year 2019-2020 (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.)

The intent of this rule is to prevent athletes whose performance levels and rankings no longer qualify them for Sport Canada carding from taking an Ontario Card from a future national-level athlete.

Canada Card Exception (CCE)

Exceptions may apply to this rule (known as a **Canada Card Exception (CCE)**) and will be considered by the Ministry on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes (e.g. reduction in Sport Canada carding allocation), injuries, etc.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to contact the PSO/MSO Selection Committee in advance of the posted QFG Application (or Residency Exception) deadline to request a CCE. The athlete must submit, in writing, an explanation of why they have not been, or do not expect to be re-carded by their NSO. The submission must include a statement from the NSO, signed and dated on the NSO's letterhead, confirming that the athlete still has potential to return to the NSO's carding program in the future.

PSO/MSOs are required to contact MHSTCI in writing prior to the submission of the Athlete Nomination Form to seek individual Canada Card Exceptions. As a CCE is still subject to Appeal by another athlete during the Appeals Process, it is essential that all requests are based on a documented submission by the athlete, the content of which will be used in the "PSO Response" to any such Appeal.

11. How does receipt of Quest for Gold - OAAP funding impact on an athlete's current or future eligibility for a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarship or their eligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport?

Effective August 1, 2013, the NCAA has revised their policies related to an athlete receiving funding from a government program (new language is bolded):

12.1.2.4.9 Exception for Training Expenses. An individual (prospective or enrolled student-athlete) may receive actual and necessary expenses [including grants, but not prize money, whereby the recipient has qualified for the grant based on his or her performance in a specific event(s)] to cover developmental training, coaching, facility usage, equipment, apparel, supplies, comprehensive health insurance, travel, room and board without jeopardizing the individual's eligibility for intercollegiate athletics, provided such expenses are approved and provided directly by the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC), the appropriate national governing body in the sport (or, for international student-athletes, the equivalent organization of that nation) **or a governmental entity.**

The effective date for this piece of legislation as it relates to **prospective student-athletes who have not started college** will apply differently than it will for **current student-athletes.**

Current student-athletes: The effective date for current student-athletes is August 1, 2013, meaning they cannot accept funds from a governmental entity **until after August 1, 2013.**

Prospective student-athletes: Individuals enrolling full time at a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2013 are currently being certified under the new rule. In other words, a prospective student-athlete who has accepted these funds from a governmental entity or who will accept these funds prior to the August 1 date from a governmental entity will get the benefit of the new rule (e.g. will not be required to return the funds).

Any athlete considering an application to an NCAA institution is strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center if they have any additional questions.

The onus is entirely on the athlete to determine the impact of accepting OAAP funding on current or future NCAA eligibility and to decide whether or not to accept OAAP funding. The athlete will be required to acknowledge this onus and responsibility when signing the OAAP Ontario Card application form and agreeing to the related terms and conditions of the program. The MHSTCI accepts no responsibility for any consequences that may follow, or losses that may be sustained in connection with an athlete's eligibility or ineligibility for a NCAA scholarship, or in connection with an athlete's eligibility or ineligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

National Collegiate Athletic Association

www.ncaa.org

700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
Phone: 317-917-6222

12. How does the acceptance of Quest for Gold – OAAP funding impact on an athlete’s eligibility for disability pensions, other social assistance programs or academic scholarships?

The Ministry cannot offer any definitive opinion on how acceptance of OAAP funding will impact on current or future eligibility for any other income programs or scholarships (see note below). The onus is on the athlete to check the terms and conditions of such programs or scholarships to determine their potential impact. The Ministry makes no representations or warranties regarding the possible impact of *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding on such programs, pensions or scholarships and accepts no responsibility for any consequences that may follow, or losses that may be sustained in relation to such programs, pensions or scholarships.

Please note: The Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has determined that all direct financial assistance provided to athletes under the OAAP is not to be included as income and assets for purposes of social assistance effective retroactively to January 11, 2006 when OAAP was first launched. Athletes who may be affected are encouraged to contact the nearest regional office of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Military Family Residency Exemption

The minimum one-year Ontario residency requirement for *Quest for Gold* eligibility is waived with respect to an athlete who is a spouse or dependant of a member of the Canadian Forces and who takes up residence in Ontario during the fiscal year.

A “member of the Canadian Forces” means:

- A regular force member; or
- A member of the reserve force of the Canadian Forces referred to in subsection 15(3) of the *National Defence Act* (Canada) who falls within the circumstances described in clause 50.2(1) (a) or (b) of the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*.

This means that eligible military family members now meet Quest for Gold - OAAP residency requirements immediately upon becoming residents in Ontario. The athlete must also meet all other program requirements, including the PSO/MSO’s athlete ranking process, as detailed in the PSO/MSO’s Selection Criteria.

In order to qualify for this exemption, the following documents must be presented to the PSO/MSO Selection Committee, who will forward said documents to MHSTCI for confirmation of eligibility:

- A. If the Canadian Forces member is present, any one of the following is acceptable:
 - Canadian Forces member’s Military Identification Card (e.g. NDI 20)
 - Special Passport (for military family members returning from an out-of-country posting)
 - Canadian Forces Member’s Personnel Record Resumé
 - Canadian Forces member’s Posting Message (with accompanying photo identification)
 - Letter from local Ontario Military Family Resource Center on letterhead confirming military family status of applicants (issued at the discretion of the local Military Family Resource Centre)
- B. If the Canadian Forces member is NOT present at the time of application, any one of the following documents is acceptable:
 - Special Passport (for military family members returning from an out-of-country posting)
 - Canadian Forces Member’s Personnel Record Resumé
 - Letter from the local Military Family Resource Center on letterhead confirming military family status of applicants (issued at the discretion of the local Military Family Resource Centre)

The MHSTCI reserves the right to request additional documentation to establish eligibility for this exemption. For more information, please contact the MHSTCI directly at 416-314-7692.

Athlete Selection Requirements and Process

- How are athletes selected for Canada Cards and Ontario Cards?
- How will the selection process work for Ontario Cards?
- What is meant by “maintaining gender equality” when nominating athletes?
- Gender Equity Rule when PSO/MSO Opts for “Card Splitting”

A. How are athletes selected for Canada Cards and Ontario Cards?

Canada Cards:

All Ontario athletes funded through Sport Canada’s Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) and continuing to meet AAP eligibility requirements will automatically qualify for Canada Card status under the OAAP. Canada Card applicants currently living/training outside Ontario must provide the MHSTCI with a letter from their NSO confirming their permanent Ontario residency.

Note: MHSTCI staff will administer all aspects of the Canada Card - the PSO/MSO Selection Committee is not responsible for this portion of the program. MHSTCI will seek the PSO/MSO’s input to confirm that an athlete competes on behalf of Ontario.

Ontario Cards:

Athletes will be nominated for Ontario Cards by their PSO/MSO using an objective sport specific selection criteria developed by a “Selection Committee” appointed by the PSO/MSO. The selection criteria must be clear, objective, and transparent, and must be applied in a manner that is free from bias, discrimination and conflict of interest.

Please see page 65 for more information regarding Conflict of Interest and relevant examples.

Note: In the event of a conflict or inconsistency, the selection criteria established by the MHSTCI and set out in these Guidelines and duplicated in the Athlete Handbook provided to each nominated athlete shall prevail over the selection criteria established by the PSO/MSO.

B. How will the selection criteria process work for Ontario Cards?

The following is a step-by-step outline of the process to be followed by the PSO/MSO in the nomination of athletes for Ontario Cards. MHSTCI staff are also available to meet with PSO/MSO representatives to provide more detail or assistance with these steps.

Please share this section with your Selection Committee and make frequent reference to it.



1) Select Cycle:

The 2019-2020 Program will operate as one cycle only.

2) Confirmation of Eligibility:

MHSTCI staff determines if the PSO/MSO meets the minimum eligibility requirements and responsibilities for PSO/MSOs. This includes the review of the *High Performance Questionnaire*, if the not previously submitted.

3) Selection Committee:

The PSO/MSO forms an Athlete Selection Committee which must include a minimum of three members. Wherever possible the committee should include the PSO/MSO's High Performance Coordinator/ Director or a High Performance provincial level coach. An NSO rep is also a highly recommended contributor to this committee, to promote alignment with national level key performance indicators and national athlete selections. **Please refer to the Conflict of Interest information on page 65 prior to establishing the membership of the Selection Committee.** Parents or coaches of potential nominees should not be involved in the process.

4) Athlete Selection Criteria Template – Guiding Principles:

Using the MHSTCI-provided "Athlete Selection Criteria Template" found on page 30 of this binder, the Athlete Selection Committee must create "sport specific athlete selection criteria" for the selection of athletes.

The following guiding principles must be considered in the creation of sport specific athlete selection criteria:

- Performance standards used in the nomination of athletes should be prepared in consultation with the NSO.
- Selection criteria must be clear, objective, and transparent, and must be applied in a manner that is free from bias, discrimination and conflict of interest. Please see page 65 for more information on Conflict of Interest and relevant examples.
- The criteria must be based on objective results. The PSO/MSO may choose to use the results from designated provincial and national competitions (which may include National Championships), designated international competitions or a combination of these competitions.
- In addition to using international and domestic results in the development of sport-specific criteria, PSO/MSOs may also use objective measures of technical ability and skill levels. When referring to national/international tables and scores, be very specific about which scores/tables will be used, listing dates wherever possible. Example: The Selection Committee will reference the most recent 'ABC points list' available as of December 1, 2019.
- Team sport selection criteria must be linked to the Provincial Team selection criteria and any Provincial Team depth chart (where applicable). The Selection Committee must be able to explain this scoring methodology in full, on request.
- The opportunity to meet competitive results required for carding must be consistent with a sport's provincial training or competitive program and be accessible to the majority of the best athletes in Ontario.
- PSO/MSOs have the option of nominating athletes from one or more developmental categories at their discretion. However, cards allotted must be gender equal within total carding allotment where applicable.
- Decisions must not be made in an arbitrary manner. For example, any reference to age in the selection criteria should not be established arbitrarily. The PSO/MSO must be able to demonstrate through statistical evidence and expert opinion that there is a clear link between the reference to age in the criteria and the potential to achieve Canada Card/Sport Canada AAP status.
- No limit may be placed on the number of years an athlete can be nominated for an Ontario Card, as long as the athlete meets the selection criteria, **continues to show progression of skills** and is still age-eligible to compete on the national team in the year following receipt of Ontario Card funding.

5) Athlete Selection Criteria Template – Requirements and Process:

The 'black text' found within the template is MHSTCI-mandatory information and shall not be modified. PSO/MSOs must revise all 'red text' and optional 'blue text' with sport-specific information and requirements.

The following must also be included:

- Process for application – Do athletes apply? To whom? By what date? Or are all eligible athletes automatically considered and ranked by the Selection Committee? If athletes are automatically ranked, a deadline date for any athlete submitting a Residency Exception or Canada Card Exception must be clearly indicated.
- The exact process by which athletes will be ranked/scored/evaluated (whether by accumulated points, rankings, selections, etc.).
- The minimum performance standard that must be met in order for an athlete to be considered. This standard shall be reviewed by the PSO/MSO **annually**.
- A clearly stated mechanism for breaking ties in rankings.
- Eligible age ranges, which must be identified and not established arbitrarily. Include a date for determining age – example – *age calculated as of December 31, 2019*.
- **Dates and names of all competitions** that will be used in the ranking process, including any alternate competitions, or competitions that can be considered as equivalents, should the athlete not be able to attend a certain event or be given the option of choosing between multiple events. If an athlete requires advance approval from the PSO/MSO to use an alternate competition, specifically state the process for seeking such approval.
- Clearly defined policy for the ranking of injured athletes. If no such policy exists, clearly indicate that no policy exists.
- State that each athlete must enter into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with the PSO/MSO (Agreement to be supplied by the PSO/MSO to the athlete). Use the template provided by the Ministry.
- List any licences an athlete must pre-purchase in order to be eligible for ranking, including the name, fee and due date.
- Any fees the Recipient requires the successful Applicant to pay in order to participate in mandatory training programs should be presented to the Applicant in the form of a detailed budget, no less than 7 days prior to the Application deadline.
- Any other information that will be considered when nominating athletes. Indicate where/when to submit any “Residency Exception” or “Canada Card Exception” requests. Examples may include but are not limited to a letter from the NSO outlining why an athlete is training outside of Ontario.
- The final application deadline and process for applying must be clearly articulated to the PSO/MSO membership. The selection criteria must indicate whether all eligible athletes are automatically ranked for nomination by the Selection Committee, or whether athletes must submit a formal application to be considered. If the latter option is used, it is recommended that PSO/MSO Selection Committees send a confirmation email by a pre-announced date confirming receipt of any athlete applications.
- If an athlete is required to submit results as part of their application, clearly state the exact requirements and accept no alternatives.
- Appeals information as included in the Selection Criteria Template.

Important notes on Selection Criteria:

- If the Athlete Selection Criteria includes mandatory PSO/MSO-sanctioned competitions an athlete must attend as part of the ranking process, the PSO/MSO shall guarantee that athlete entry into the event, assuming the athlete meets all event registration/entry requirements and deadlines. If a mandatory provincial level event is open to non-Ontario athletes, for purposes of *Quest for Gold* ranking, the PSO/MSO shall prepare a separate ranking list which only includes Ontario athletes, for the use of the PSO/MSO Selection Committee.
- It is the PSO/MSO's responsibility, through its Selection Committee, to ensure that all athletes nominated for carding status are eligible under the Ministry's eligibility criteria and the PSO/MSO's criteria.

For example: If an athlete is living or training outside Ontario and is being considered on a "Residency Exception", as stipulated within the Athlete Eligibility Criteria (see page 30), it is the responsibility of the PSO/MSO to determine if that athlete is eligible under one of the allowable exceptions. It is the PSO/MSO's further responsibility to complete whatever inquiries / information gathering is necessary to make such a determination before making a decision related to the eligibility of that athlete. The PSO/MSO must agree that it will only nominate athletes who meet all eligibility criteria as set out in the OAAP Guidelines.

6) Review of previous Selection Criteria Performance Standards:

Prior to finalizing the Selection Criteria, the Selection Committee shall review the performance results of the previous year's nominees to ensure that the Criterion are at a level suitably high to nominate only those athletes with the potential to reach the national team in the next 1 to 3 years. The PSO is not obligated to assign all Ontario Cards if there are an insufficient number of athletes who have demonstrated potential to be considered for future National Teams.

7) Card Splitting:

- PSO/MSOs may choose to "split" up to 30% of their Ontario Card allotment so that they can issue "half cards" to athletes nominated in predetermined developmental categories. Please refer to the MHSTCI Memo that accompanied this binder for the exact carding allocation and maximum quantity that may be split.
- If "half cards" are to be issued, this information, including the number of cards to be "split" and to which category they will be issued must be detailed in the Athlete Selection Criteria document.
- Cards can only be split by categories/disciplines. Athletes within the same category/discipline must receive the same level of carding.

8) Program Deadlines:

Please refer to page 63 of this binder for Program deadlines that must be inserted within the Athlete Selection Criteria document.

9) Review by MHSTCI:

The Selection Committee shall submit the “*Athlete Selection Criteria*” document. MHSTCI will review the document for errors and omissions and may suggest revisions to the PSO/MSO.

The PSO/MSO shall not make further changes to the Selection Criteria without sharing those changes with the Ministry.

NOTE: In order to facilitate the review of PSO/MSO revisions by MHSTCI, please keep all PSO/MSO revisions in the red/blue fonts. The document can be switched to one uniform colour following the review by MHSTCI.

Do not send to MHSTCI in PDF format.

10) Communicating Selection Criteria:

The PSO/MSO must publish the selection criteria (see attached template on page 51 for announcement of selection criteria) so that it is known to athletes and members (i.e. on website, in newsletter or through communications to athletes and members (Twitter, e-mail)). The final application deadline and process for applying must be clearly articulated to the PSO/MSO membership. The selection criteria must indicate whether all eligible athletes are automatically ranked for nomination by the Selection Committee, or whether athletes must submit a formal application to be considered. If the latter option is used, it is highly recommended that PSO/MSO Selection Committees send a confirmation email by a pre-announced date confirming receipt of any athlete applications. Examples have occurred of athlete applications being lost during transmission, and only through this confirmation process were they discovered.

PSO/MSOs should consider requiring athletes to apply to be ranked, thus confirming their interest and willingness to accept the nomination. This saves the PSO/MSO from having to contact those athletes who later decline carding.

The PSO/MSO cannot alter their sport specific athlete selection criteria after it has been made known to the athletes and members. The selection criteria shall require athletes living/training outside of Ontario to submit written documentation to the Selection Committee clearly identifying how they meet the exceptions identified in the Ministry’s General Eligibility Criteria.

11) **Selection of Athletes:**

The Athlete Selection Committee applies the General and Sport-specific Athlete Eligibility criteria, reviews any documentation received from athletes living/training out of province and applying under the exceptions to the general eligibility criteria and nominates athletes for Ontario Cards. The Selection Committee will contact MHSTCI in writing at this time to seek a Canada Card Exception for any athlete who was previously Sport Canada-carded. See page 16, item #10 for details.

NOTE: In the event of a conflict or inconsistency, the selection criteria established by the Ministry and set out in these Guidelines and duplicated in the Athlete Handbook provided to each nominated athlete shall prevail over the selection criteria established by the PSO/MSO.

12) **Selection of Alternates:**

- PSO/MSOs are encouraged to nominate alternates to those athletes nominated for Ontario Card status (unless alternates are announced, there is no opportunity to replace an athlete who becomes Sport Canada carded, drops out or declines the nomination).
- Alternates must be those athletes who are ranked directly behind those athletes nominated for the allotment of Ontario Cards in a particular category.
- The names of alternates must be published along with the names of nominated athletes.
- PSO/MSOs who identify alternates will be permitted to substitute an alternate for an Ontario Carded athlete who drops out or is removed from the OAAP provided that:
 - Alternate is substituted within 2019-2020 fiscal year;
 - An alternate is available from the same category/discipline/card level (full/half);
 - Funding for athlete being substituted is still available within fiscal year (e.g. full funding for card has not already been paid out to athlete no longer in program).
- PSO/MSOs must submit the name of the alternate and the name of the athlete to be removed to MHSTCI using the ***Athlete Nomination & Substitution of Alternate Form*** provided by MHSTCI.

13) **Submitting list of athletes to MHSTCI:**

The PSO/MSO submits to MHSTCI their list of nominated athletes to verify compliance with administrative requirements of the program. **Only the MHSTCI-provided Athlete Nomination and Submission of Alternate Form will be accepted for this process.**

Please note this template also includes a requirement to list all athletes that were considered and deemed ineligible. These athletes must be listed with their reason for exclusion (e.g. outside age limit, did not meet Residency Exception, etc.).

The nature of some PSO/MSO Selection Criteria require very complicated calculations. Please be sure to have a third party double-check all calculations.

14) **MHSTCI Review:**

MHSTCI reviews PSO/MSO's nominated athlete list for compliance with administrative requirements of the program (confirming correct quantity of athletes, correct age limits, no athletes receiving Canada Cards) and sends an email confirmation to PSO/MSO which also includes a letter and Athlete Handbook for the PSO/MSO to forward to each athlete. The

Athlete Handbook contains important details about the OAAP as well as detailed instructions for the online application.

15) Announcement of DRAFT LIST of Athletes:

The PSO/MSO must publish or otherwise make known to members the nominated list of athletes and alternates, Appeals procedures and timelines. See page 50 for further details on appeal procedure and template for announcement of nominated athletes, alternates and appeal information. It is important that PSO/MSOs use this revised template which details that the announced list of athletes and alternates is deemed “unofficial and draft” until any potential appeals have been reviewed. It is recommended that the Selection Committee directly contact those athletes who were close to, but failed to be nominated, to provide specific details of why they were not nominated and describe specific areas of weakness.

16) Responding to Athlete Inquiries:

- Athletes who are not nominated for an Ontario Card by the PSO/MSO Selection Committee are entitled to request written reasons for that decision.
- When an athlete makes a request for reasons, the PSO/MSO is obligated to provide those reasons to the athlete in writing.
- The PSO/MSO is also required to notify the athlete that they are entitled to appeal the decision by filing a Notice of Appeal.

NOTE: Since implementing this step in the process the quantity of formal appeals has significantly declined.

17) Athlete Applications:

The PSO/MSO instructs their nominated athletes to complete the *Quest for Gold* ‘Application Form’, a PDF form provided by the Ministry.

NOTE: Only nominated athletes shall submit this Form. Alternates should only submit once they are officially substituted.

18) Appeals Process:

- Appeals must be submitted by athletes in writing to MHSTCI using the “**Notice of Appeal**” template provided by MHSTCI by the deadlines seen on page 63.
- The PSO/MSO shall not “support” an athlete’s appeal. **An appeal “supported” by the PSO/MSO will be returned to the PSO/MSO by the Ministry** to be dealt with by the PSO/MSO in-house rather than deferring it to the Appeals Committee.
- MHSTCI will provide a copy of the athlete’s Notice of Appeal to the PSO/MSO. The PSO/MSO must then submit a “**Response**” in writing to MHSTCI using the template provided by MHSTCI. See page 49 for further details and deadlines.
- MHSTCI will provide a copy of the PSO/MSO’s Response to the athlete. If, after receiving the PSO/MSO’s Response, the athlete believes that the PSO/MSO has raised new or additional reasons to justify its decision not to nominate the athlete for an Ontario

Card, the athlete will then have an opportunity to submit a “**Reply**” to MHSTCI, responding to these additional reasons. The Reply must be limited to these additional reasons and cannot be used to make submissions already raised in the Notice of Appeal, or that the athlete neglected to include in the Notice of Appeal. The Reply will only be accepted on the MHSTCI-provided template. See page 50 for further details and deadlines.

- All materials received by MHSTCI (i.e. Notice of Appeal, Response and Reply, if applicable) will be provided to the Appeals Committee. During an appeal, the Appeals Committee may request additional information from the athlete and the PSO/MSO. See page 50 for further details.

19) Announce FINAL LIST of Nominated Athletes:

Once the Appeals Committee has reached a final decision on any appeals received, it will contact the athlete and the PSO/MSO in writing to communicate its decision and the reasons therefore. At this time the PSO/MSO will update the previous DRAFT LIST of nominees, making it a FINAL LIST of Ontario Card nominees.

20) Confirm receipt of all Sports Organization – Athlete Agreements:

Using the template provided by MHSTCI, PSO/MSO must send written confirmation to MHSTCI that all nominated athletes have returned their signed Athlete Agreement to the PSO/MSO. Funding will not be released to athletes within the PSO/MSO until this completed confirmation is submitted.

21) MHSTCI processes online entries for payment:

Payments are made after all Appeals have been completed and after PSO/MSO confirmation that all Sports Organizations – Athlete Agreements have been received.

Note: Funding levels for Ontario Cards will not be known until the total funding available and the number of athletes eligible for carding is determined.

C. What is meant by “maintaining gender equality” when nominating athletes?

The intent of the gender equality rule is to ensure that PSO/MSOs are nominating their best male and female high performance athletes in equal proportion in any given developmental category that the PSO/MSO selects for nominating purposes. The intent is to nominate an equal number of high performance male and female athletes, regardless of proportion relative to overall membership or any other factor.

PSO/MSOs must ensure “gender equity” within the total allotment of Ontario Cards. For example, if a particular PSO/MSO has an allotment of 10 Ontario Cards then 5 cards must be allotted to males and 5 cards must be allotted to females. If there is a disproportionate amount of males vs. females in a particular developmental category chosen the PSO/MSO

must go to another developmental category to balance out the carding allotment between males and females.

The gender equity rule does not apply to PSOs that have been allotted cards for one gender only (e.g. women's hockey/ringette) or PSOs that have been allotted an uneven number of Ontario Cards by gender (e.g. boxing). See page 59 for more details.

4. Gender Equity Rule when PSO/MSO Opts for “Card Splitting”

The gender equity rule also applies to PSO/MSOs exercising the “card splitting” option. The Ministry will not allow a disproportionate number of full cards or split cards to be issued to one gender over the other.

Example:

Not Permitted:

- Sport X has an allotment of 10 Ontario Cards
- Sport X splits 3 cards for a total of:
 - 7 full cards
 - 6 half cards
- Sport X issues
 - 7 full cards to males
 - 6 half cards to a females
- Sport X claims gender equity given relative equality in total cards issued to each gender (7 to 6)

Permitted:

- Sport X has an allotment of 10 Ontario Cards
- Sport X splits 2 cards for a total of:
 - 8 full cards
 - 4 half cards
- Sport X issues
 - 4 full cards to males
 - 4 full cards to females
 - 2 half cards to a males
 - 2 half cards to females
- Sport X is in compliance with gender equity rule

PSO/MSO's cannot split more than 30% of their Ontario Card allotment.

Please see page 61 for further details on card splitting option.

PSO/MSOs will use this template for the posting of Sport-Specific Athlete Selection Criteria for Ontario Cards. Using the 'search & replace' function for "PSO NAME HERE" will get you started quickly.

LEGEND:

Black type is mandatory and can't be revised

Yellow Highlights are notes/guides to PSO/MSOs and can be removed when read

Red type requires PSO/MSO updates

Blue type is optional PSO/MSO updates and can be removed where not applicable

Please maintain these colours when template is returned to MHSTCI for review. Document can be made all one colour after MHSTCI review/input. Thanks!



PSO/MSOs INSERT LOGO HERE

PSO NAME HERE
Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2019-2020
ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1.0 *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2019-2020 (OAAP) is funded by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI), and operated through the Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Division. The overarching goal of the *Quest for Gold* – OAAP is directly related to the High Performance Sport goal of the *Canadian Sport Policy* – that Canadians are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition – by improving the performance and number of Ontario athletes performing at the national and international level, thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions.

Specific objectives of the program are:

- a) To help athletes continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition;
- b) To encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train;
- c) To compensate athletes for earnings lost while training;
- d) To enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals;
- e) To increase athlete access to improved high performance coaching; and
- f) To enhance training and competitive opportunities available to athletes.

The intent of the OAAP is to provide funding to individual athletes in the sport's Train to Train through Train to Win categories based on their demonstrated commitment to high performance sport, allowing them to continue to pursue athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition. **Only those athletes that meet the required minimum performance standard detailed in this Selection Criteria will be considered for this program.** Ideally an athlete will first receive a Quest for Gold "Ontario Card" for 1 to 3 years, which will allow them to train towards the goal of a national team position in subsequent years. Once an Ontario athlete reaches the national level and becomes a recipient of Sport Canada's carding program, they become eligible for the Quest

for Gold "Canada Card". Athletes who are not planning to train towards this level of competition should not apply for this program.

2.0 How does it work?

In accordance with the OAAP guidelines, **PSO NAME HERE** develops sport-specific selection criteria and forms a Selection Committee that will apply these criteria. The top-ranked athletes, based on the criteria, will be awarded Ontario Card status in 2019-2020. This Selection Criteria has been approved by the PSO and reviewed by MHSTCI staff. Nominated athletes will be required to sign and comply with an Athlete Agreement between the athlete and **PSO NAME HERE**. Carding status will be for one year starting April 1, 2019 ending March 31, 2020. Carded athletes will be required to compete exclusively on behalf of the Province of Ontario at National Championship events and for Canada at International Championship events, for a period of one year from the date carding is approved and acknowledge Ontario as their permanent place of residence on athlete profiles, Media Guides, PSO/NSO and personal websites, and in similar types of public communications.

2.1 For 2019-2020, the MHSTCI has allocated **PSO NAME HERE** a total of **XX** Ontario cards (split evenly as **X** male and **X** female Cards).

OPTIONAL (delete if not splitting cards) **PSO NAME HERE** has also decided to exercise the option made available by MHSTCI to split up to 30% of its carding allotment (i.e. issue ½ cards in designated categories).

A minimum of 70% of the Ontario Cards will be allocated to what the MHSTCI defines as junior-aged athletes (11 to 22 years of age). A maximum of 30% of the Ontario Cards may be allocated to athletes no longer eligible for "junior athlete" status, (athletes 23 and over).

2.2 As a result, the **XX** cards issued to **PSO NAME HERE** will be allocated as follows:

	Male	Female
Full Cards – Y	Y/2	Y/2
Half Cards – Y full cards = Z half cards	Z/2	Z/2

OPTIONAL – IF YOUR PSO HAS MULTIPLE CATEGORIES/DISCIPLINES, THE CHART BELOW MUST BE USED TO INDICATE THE QUANTITY OF CARDS TO BE ALLOCATED BY CATEGORY/DISCIPLINE. CARDS CAN ONLY BE SPLIT BY CATEGORIES/DISCIPLINES. ATHLETES WITHIN THE SAME CATEGORY/DISCIPLINE MUST RECEIVE THE SAME LEVEL OF CARDING.

Cards will be specifically allocated to the following categories/disciplines:

NOTE TO PSO/MSOs – these are sample categories to be modified to names specific to your organization.

Category	Number of cards
Category name (ex. Senior level athletes)	X Full Cards (Y male, Y female)
Category name (ex. Junior level athletes)	Y Full Cards = Z Half Cards (Z/2 male, Z/2 female)

An athlete's age will be determined as of **PSO INSERT DATE HERE.(example: January 1, 2019)**

PSO NAME HERE is not obligated to assign all Ontario Cards if there are an insufficient number of athletes who have demonstrated potential to be considered for future National Teams.

2.3 The Selection Committee, as approved by the **PSO NAME HERE** is comprised of the following members:

Name, position within PSO/MSO or NSO
 Name, position within PSO/MSO or NSO
 Name, position within PSO/MSO or NSO

How much funding is available?

The exact level of funding for the 2019-2020 carding year will be determined by the MHSTCI after the total number of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status has been determined.

How will the **PSO NAME HERE Selection Committee decide who receives funding?**

The **PSO NAME HERE** Selection Committee will use the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries Eligibility Criteria and the Sport Specific Selection Criteria detailed below to determine which athletes will be nominated for Ontario Card status in 2019-2020.

3.0 Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries Eligibility Criteria:

All athletes must meet the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries' minimum athlete eligibility criteria:

- Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (previously known as a Landed Immigrant).
- Athlete must be a permanent resident of Ontario **for one year prior** to his/her nomination for carding status, (and continue to be a permanent resident throughout the term of the agreement).
- Athletes who have achieved Canada Card status (carded by Sport Canada) are not eligible for Ontario Cards.
- Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario.

3.1 Residency Exceptions:

Exceptions to these criteria, known as a "Residency Exception" will be considered **on a case specific basis by the **PSO NAME HERE**** Selection Committee provided that the athlete can substantiate in writing that:

- (a) He/She cannot receive the required level of training in Ontario and is out of the province **temporarily** during the year (i.e. due to lack of facilities, coaching, competitions);
- (b) He/She must attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province either because the course of study is not offered by an Ontario institution; or
- (c) It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province, or other extenuating circumstances that require the athlete to be out of the province.

Any change in an athlete's residency status must be communicated in writing to the PSO/MSO immediately.

The onus is on the athlete to demonstrate that he/she needs to be out-of-province for one of the above reasons.

The athlete must submit written documentation to the **PSO NAME HERE by no later than **INSERT DATE HERE**, clearly indicating how they meet a residency exception(s).**

Athlete's applying for a Residency Exception related to exception (a) above, who are training at an NSO-approved National Training Centre MUST include a letter from the NSO outlining their support for the athlete, the progress the athlete is making and the athlete's potential to make the national team level. Additional documentation may include, but shall not be limited to an explanation of why the athlete is training out of province, whether or not the athlete was formally invited by the NSO, what additional opportunities are being made available beyond those provided in Ontario; and any other information that will illustrate that the athlete is receiving enhanced training while still meeting all obligations of the **PSO NAME HERE**.

3.2 Length of time living outside Ontario:

Athletes living outside Ontario for more than 30 consecutive days within the ministry fiscal year 2019-2020 for athletic or academic purposes must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO Selection Committee that appropriate training programs are in place and are being monitored by the PSO/MSO. The onus is on the athlete to:

1. Provide a written plan outlining their training and competition plans to the PSO/MSO prior to their departure from Ontario, as part of their Residency Exception request (**due INSERT SAME DATE AS ABOVE**); and
2. Adhere to the PSO/MSO-approved competition and training plan throughout the carding cycle. At a minimum, this requires regular (**PSO/MSO to define frequency and method in their Selection Criteria**) contact by the athlete with the PSO/MSO (**PSO/MSO TO INSERT HERE WHO TO CONTACT**); and
3. Submit regular (**PSO/MSO to define frequency**) training logs to the PSO/MSO to track progress against the PSO/MSO-approved competition and training plan.

Athletes who were formally invited to and are currently participating in their NSO's national team training program are exempt from this requirement.

3.3 Ministry criteria continued:

- Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and NSO where applicable;
- Athlete must have entered into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with his or her PSO/MSO and must be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement;
- Athlete must have met all terms and conditions of any previous *Quest for Gold* Sports Organization – Athlete Agreements to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO in order to be eligible for consideration in 2019-2020;
- Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program, the goal of which is to continue to train towards a national team position and Sport Canada carding;
- Athlete's coach should be minimum Level 2 NCCP certified or trained status Competition Stream or the sport's equivalent in the Instruction Stream, or be engaged in completing this training, as determined by the PSO;
- Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy;
- Athlete must be attending an educational institution full-time (i.e. elementary and secondary schools):
 - Exceptions will be made provided that the athlete can substantiate that his/her training will not allow for full-time attendance or if an athlete requires special needs that preclude full or part-time attendance (e.g. Athlete with a disability (AWAD) athlete);
- Athletes who have completed their area of study at the secondary level (i.e. high school) and who continue to train towards participation in major national or international competitions will also be considered;
- If eligible, the athlete must compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario and/or Canada for one year from the date of the Minister's letter informing the athlete of acceptance into OAAP program, at Canada Games and other national competitions involving provincial team competitions;
- Athlete must not receive financial support from any other provincial/territorial athlete assistance program. This does not include academic scholarships, bursaries, student grants, student loans, social assistance, disability pensions, and other forms of financial assistance that have nothing to do with competitive sport.
- Eligibility will be limited to Ontario junior-aged athletes, ages 11-22 ("junior-aged" refers to chronological age, not a sport's specific age category - only exception is for PSO/MSOs using 30% of Ontario Card allotment for athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO's selection process.

3.4 Residency Exemption for Military Families: The one-year Ontario residency requirement is waived for any Ontario Card or Canada Card applicant who is a spouse or dependant of a: Regular Force member of the Canadian Forces; or Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service and who takes up residence in Ontario during the fiscal year. This means that eligible military family members now qualify for OAAP funding immediately upon becoming residents of Ontario. Please contact **PSO NAME HERE** for more information if you are applying for this exemption.

- To be deemed a potential next generation national team athlete, the athlete must be age-eligible to compete on the national team in the year following receipt of Ontario Card funding.
- All athletes under the age of 18 must have their parent or legal guardian sign their OAAP application form. Cheques will be processed in the name of the eligible athlete.
- An athlete can only be nominated to receive *Quest for Gold* funding in one sport.

4.0 **Athletes funded through the Sport Canada AAP:**

Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted for funding through Sport Canada's AAP within the government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020) and who continue to meet AAP and OAAP eligibility requirements will automatically be considered for a *Quest for Gold* 'Canada Card'. MHSTCI will contact those athletes directly at the mailing and email addresses the athlete provided to Sport Canada. Athletes are solely responsible for ensuring that their contact information is kept accurate and up to date at all times.

An athlete who received Sport Canada AAP carding during any part of MHSTCI' fiscal year April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 and/or any part of fiscal year April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year 2019-2020 (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.)

The intent of this rule is to prevent athletes whose performance levels and rankings no longer qualify them for Sport Canada carding from taking an Ontario Card from a future national-level athlete.

4.1 **Canada Card Exception (CCE)**

Exceptions may apply to this rule (known as a **Canada Card Exception (CCE)**) and will be considered by the Ministry on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes (e.g. reduction in Sport Canada carding allocation), injuries, etc.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to contact **PSO NAME HERE** Selection Committee prior to **(INSERT RESIDENCY EXCEPTION DEADLINE USED ABOVE)** to request a CCE. The athlete must submit, in writing, an explanation of why they have not been, or do not expect to be re-carded by their NSO. The submission must include a statement from the NSO, signed and dated on their letterhead, confirming that the athlete still has potential to return to the NSO's carding program in the future. It is the responsibility of the athlete to submit this letter to the PSO; the **PSO NAME HERE** will not obtain this letter from the NSO on the athlete's behalf.

PSO NAME HERE will then contact MHSTCI in writing prior to the submission of the Athlete Nomination Form to seek individual Canada Card Exceptions. **PSO NAME HERE** is not responsible for seeking a CCE for any athlete unless requested to do so by the athlete as detailed above.

5.0 **National College Athletic Association (NCAA):**

On August 1, 2013, the NCAA revised their By-law that previously prevented an athlete from accepting grants from a governmental entity, such as *Quest for Gold*. Despite this change, any athlete considering an application to an NCAA institution is strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to applying for QFG funding.

The onus is entirely on the athlete to determine the impact of accepting OAAP funding on current or future NCAA eligibility and to decide whether or not to accept OAAP funding. The athlete will be required to acknowledge this onus and responsibility when signing the OAAP Ontario Card application form and agreeing to the related terms and conditions of the program. Athletes are strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine the impact of *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding on current or future eligibility for a NCAA scholarship or on eligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

National Collegiate Athletic Association www.ncaa.org

700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
Phone: 317-917-6222

6.0 **PSO NAME HERE Athlete Selection Criteria:**

The following sport specific athlete selection criteria will be utilized in the identification, ranking and selection of athletes for Ontario Cards:

Note to PSO/MSOs – Insert your sport specific criteria here. Refer to page 20 for full details, guiding principles and requirements.

Criteria MUST include minimum performance thresholds that athletes must meet in order to qualify for nomination.

7.0 Breaking a Tie: (NOTE TO PSO/MSOs – a tie-breaking solution is mandatory)

If there is a tie in the final score between 2 athletes, the Selection Committee will

NOTE TO PSO/MSOs: OPTIONAL – MAY ONLY BE USED IF THE PSO/MSO HAS A CLEARLY DOCUMENTED POLICY FOR RANKING INJURED ATHLETES – POLICY MUST BE INCLUDED BELOW. IF NO POLICY EXISTS, INSERT THIS WORDING:

8.0 Failure to Meet Selection Criteria for Health-related Reasons

Athletes who, for strictly health-related reasons, have not achieved the standards required for nomination of carded status may be considered for nomination under the following conditions:

- The athlete has fulfilled all reasonable training and rehabilitation requirements aimed at a speedy return to full high-performance training and competition during the period of his or her injury, illness or pregnancy and, despite making every reasonable effort to attain the applicable carding standards during the year in which the injury, illness or pregnancy occurred, has failed to do so, in the view of the PSO/MSO, for reasons strictly related to the injury, illness or pregnancy.
- The PSO NAME HERE, based on its technical judgement and that of a PSO/MSO team physician or equivalent, indicates in writing the expectation that the athlete will achieve at least the minimum standards required for carding during the upcoming carding period.
- The athlete has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate his or her long-term commitment to high-performance training and competition goals, as well as his or her intention to pursue full high-performance training and competition throughout the carding period for which he or she wishes to be renewed despite not having met the carding criteria.

PSO/MSO MUST ADD HERE what process will be used for ranking athletes that meet these criteria. For example – using results from the same events from the previous competitive season.

NOTE TO PSO/MSOs: If criteria is not included within the Selection Criteria, MHSTCI will not allow athletes to be nominated in this category.

PSO NAME HERE has no criteria for ranking an athlete who is unable to meet these requirements as detailed above due to illness, injury or pregnancy.

9.0 Alternates: PSO NAME HERE will also nominate alternates to those athletes nominated for Ontario Card status. Alternates will be those athletes who are ranked directly behind those athletes nominated for the allotment of Ontario Cards in a particular category/discipline. The names of alternates will be published along with the names of nominated athletes. If an athlete drops out or is removed from the OAAP an alternate will be substituted into that athlete's position, provided that:

- Alternate is substituted within 2019-2020 fiscal year;
- An alternate meeting all requirements is available from the same category/discipline/card level (Full/Half);
- Funding for athlete being substituted is still available within fiscal year (e.g. full funding for card has not already been paid out to athlete no longer in program).

10.0 To Apply:

All required information **(PSO/MSO – list exact requirements here)** must be submitted no later than **INSERT DATE HERE** to:

- Name
- Email
- Address
- Phone number

10.1 Any athlete requesting a “Residency Exception” must submit this information by **INSERT DATE HERE** as detailed above.

10.2 It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to provide a full and complete application that meets all stated requirements. PSO NAME HERE will neither review applications in advance of the deadline in order to make applicants aware of any missing/incorrect information and/or attachments nor make corrections on behalf of the athlete. Any revisions on the part of the athlete will only be accepted prior to the posted submission deadline.

Applications that are sent directly to the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries rather than to PSO NAME HERE will not be considered valid or to have been received by the PSO NAME HERE deadline.

10.3 **OPTIONAL, BUT HIGHLY SUGGESTED:** An email will be sent by **INSERT DATE HERE** confirming receipt. It is the athlete’s responsibility to contact the PSO NAME HERE if this email is not received to be certain that the application has been successfully received by the deadline date.

The Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement will only come into effect if an athlete is selected and accepts carding status through the OAAP program. Athletes who fail to return a signed Athlete Agreement by the deadline date will not be carded.

10.4 **PSO NAME HERE** will publish or make known a draft list of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status by no later than **April 8, 2020**.

In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between the MHSTCI eligibility requirements detailed in the MHSTCI binder provided to PSO/MSOs and duplicated in the Athlete Handbook provided to each nominated athlete and the eligibility requirements listed in the PSO/MSO Athlete Selection Criteria Document prepared by the PSO/MSO, the MHSTCI Binder/Athlete Handbook shall prevail.
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11.0 Appeals

Athletes who have not been nominated for an Ontario Card by the **PSO NAME HERE** Selection Committee or who have been nominated for a 'Half Card' versus a 'Full Card', where applicable will be allowed to appeal that decision by filing a "Notice of Appeal" with MHSTCI. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Committee comprised of representatives from the sport community, selected by the MHSTCI.

Grounds for appeals will be limited strictly to issues related to:

- A) Whether or not the Selection Committee has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- B) Whether or not the Selection Committee applied the selection criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Issues related to the specific content or selection requirements contained in the **PSO NAME HERE** Selection Criteria are not grounds for an appeal and should therefore be discussed directly with the leadership of **PSO NAME HERE**.

Please note that before an athlete can file a Notice of Appeal, he or she must first ask **PSO NAME HERE** for reasons explaining why he or she was not nominated for an Ontario Card.

If the athlete is not satisfied with the **PSO NAME HERE** response, the athlete may submit a **Notice of Appeal**, found below. A Notice of Appeal will only be accepted from the athlete or their parent/guardian on the MHSTCI-provided template (typed or hand-printed, no hand-written entries) through email, regular post, registered mail, courier or delivered in person. One appeal cannot be written on behalf of multiple athletes. The Notice of Appeal must be received by MHSTCI by noon on the deadline day. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery.

Once MHSTCI has received the Notice of Appeal, it will share it with **PSO NAME HERE**, who will then submit a "**Response**" with MHSTCI by a specified deadline. The Response will outline why **PSO NAME HERE** believes that the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete should be upheld by the Appeals Committee. MHSTCI will share the **PSO NAME HERE** Response with the athlete.

If, after receiving the **PSO NAME HERE** Response, the athlete believes that **PSO NAME HERE** has raised new or additional reasons to justify the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete for an Ontario Card, then the athlete will have an opportunity to file a "**Reply**" with MHSTCI, responding to these additional reasons. The Reply must be limited to these additional reasons and cannot be used to make submissions already raised in the Notice of Appeal, or that the athlete neglected to include in the Notice of Appeal. The Reply will only be accepted on the MHSTCI-provided template.

Once MHSTCI receives the Notice of Appeal, the Response, and the Reply (if applicable), it will provide those materials to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will discuss all appeals at once. During its review of the appeals, the Appeals Committee reserves the right to request additional information from both the athlete and **PSO NAME HERE**.

After reviewing an appeal the Appeals Committee will have the authority to:

- 1. Direct **PSO NAME HERE** to redo the selection process using the correct criteria/process and submit a new list of nominated athletes;
- 2. Deny the appeal; or
- 3. Allow the appeal and nominate the appellant for carding status.

Once the Appeals Committee has reached its decision, it will contact the athlete and **PSO NAME HERE** in writing to communicate its decision and the reasons therefore.

An athlete who has had his or her appeal denied is not permitted to submit a second appeal to the Appeals Committee on the same or different grounds.

Note: **PSO NAME HERE** is encouraged to resolve disputes or disagreements informally with athletes who have not been nominated to avoid, wherever possible, formal appeals.

11.1 The deadline for athletes to submit an “**Athlete’s Notice of Appeal**” to the Appeals Committee is **April 20, 2020 at 12 noon.**

11.2 Appeals must be completed on the Notice of Appeal template below and will be directed to:

Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1S5
Email: questforgold@ontario.ca

2019-2020 *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program Athlete’s Notice of Appeal Template

Appeals will only be accepted on the MHSTCI-provided Notice of Appeal template. **Please refer to the appeals section of your PSO/MSO’s Athlete Selection Criteria document prior to completing this form.**

Deadline: 12 noon on April 20, 2020

Return form to:
***Quest for Gold* Appeals Committee**
c/o Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1S5 Email: questforgold@ontario.ca

Full Name _____
Address _____ City _____
Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Sport / PSO _____

Reason for Appeal (Check all that apply):

- Whether or not the PSO/MSO has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- Whether or not the PSO/MSO applied the section criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Provide a two-line summary of the reason for the appeal:

In the space below, (continue on to next page as needed) provide the reasons communicated to you by your PSO/MSO as to why you were not nominated for an Ontario Card, and the date the information was provided. (Note: This Appeal will not be accepted unless it contains a response from your PSO/MSO.)

Date of PSO response: _____

In the space below (continue on to next page as needed), provide a detailed account of the situation to allow the Appeals Committee to understand the basis of the appeal (please submit additional pages/supporting documentation as necessary):

PLEASE NOTE that all decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Print Name of Appellant	Signature of Appellant	Date
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All information provided to the Appeals Committee will be shared with both the Appellant and the PSO/MSO.

SPORTS ORGANIZATION – Athlete Agreement

It is the responsibility of the PSO/MSO to prepare a Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement and provide two copies of this Agreement to nominated athletes for signature by the athlete or their parent or legal guardian. Both copies of the Agreement must also be signed by the designated PSO/MSO authority. One copy shall be kept on file by the PSO/MSO, the second retained by the athlete or their parent or legal guardian. Using the template provided by MHSTCI, the PSO/MSO will send written confirmation to MHSTCI that all **nominated athletes** have entered into a Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement with the PSO/MSO and are in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement. **This confirmation must be received by MHSTCI by the deadline posted on page 63 of the Guidelines binder. Funding will not be released to athletes within the PSO/MSO until this confirmation is received.**

It is the responsibility of the PSO/MSO to notify the MHSTCI when an athlete has violated the terms of the Agreement and has been removed from the OAAP by the PSO/MSO.

To facilitate the development of fair and comprehensive Sports Organization - Athlete Agreements, MHSTCI has attached a sample template agreement. It should be noted that this sample agreement goes beyond MHSTCI requirements for the specific purposes of carding. Some items in the sample agreement are not applicable to all sports, and some items important to specific sports may be missing. Sports Organization - Athlete Agreements should be modified as needed to reflect the individual sport's characteristics and the individual athlete's needs. The PSO/MSO should consult its legal counsel if it requires legal assistance in producing its own sport specific Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement.

Section 1: Policies

The purpose of the Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement is to set down in writing the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the athlete and the PSO/MSO.

The Agreement must clearly specify the following:

- Eligible expenses, as outlined in the Athlete Handbook;
- Benefits available to the Ontario carded athlete through his or her PSO/MSO;
- The PSO/MSO's obligations;
- Athlete reporting requirements, as defined by the PSO/MSO (e.g. training logs);
- The athlete's obligations, including a commitment to follow an agreed-upon training and competitive program and competitive opportunities to be attended;
- Any other commitments to the PSO/MSO that the Ontario carded athlete is required to make (for instance, time, promotional activities or financial commitments/training fees, including required team/training fees payable to the PSO/MSO);
- The Agreement's duration (not to exceed one carding year);
- Specific PSO/MSO policies the carded athlete must abide by, including the following:
 - ✓ the PSO/MSO's and/or NSO's Anti-Doping policy;
 - ✓ the PSO/MSO's Codes of Conduct;
 - ✓ the Canadian Policy on Doping in Sport;
 - ✓ Ontario AAP eligibility criteria; and

- The dispute mechanism and related procedures/processes that will be used in any dispute between the carded athlete and the PSO/MSO relating to or arising out of the Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement. This procedure must conform to natural justice and procedural fairness.

Notes:

- Ontario carding is contingent upon an athlete agreeing to all conditions in his or her Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement. In other words, athletes must negotiate any changes to the Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement directly with his or her Provincial / Multi-Sport Organization.
- All clauses in the Agreement must clearly define the athlete's expected conduct.
- The Agreement must be in plain, understandable language, not legal jargon. Basic rights such as freedom of speech and confidentiality of medical records must be respected.
- The Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement must also comply with all minimum OAAP Eligibility Criteria for athletes, as detailed in the Athlete Handbook, and include a provision which stipulates that the athlete must compete for Ontario and/or Canada while enrolled in the OAAP.

Section 2: Procedures

- 1) The Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement is approved by the PSO/MSO.
- 2) The Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement is modified as required. For example, individual athletes may need to modify or negotiate specific clauses to fit their situation.

It is the PSO/MSO's responsibility to ensure that all Ontario carded athletes sign their Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement. Athletes for whom the PSO/MSO has not received the signed agreement will not be eligible for Ontario Athlete Assistance until such time as the signed agreement is received by the PSO/MSO and the PSO/MSO informs MHSTCI of this compliance.

All PSO/MSO - Athlete Agreements must include the following statements:

- **“All minimum OAAP eligibility criteria for athletes within the *Quest for Gold* Program apply to this agreement”.**
- **“This agreement shall be in effect from the date of the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport’s Approval Letter for a period of one year, unless terminated earlier”.**

SAMPLE Agreement

Each PSO/MSO is responsible for revising this template to create its own sport specific Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement and should consult its legal counsel if it requires legal advice in producing this agreement for its organization. PSO/MSOs should note Article 2d. below, where all mandatory events the athlete must participate in will be listed.

Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement

AGREEMENT made this _____ day of _____, 20__

BETWEEN

<<name of PSO/MSO>>, having its provincial office

at _____ (hereinafter referred to as "the PSO/MSO")

AND

_____, residing at

_____ (hereinafter referred to as "the Athlete").

WHEREAS the Athlete wishes to be an active competitor in PSO/MSO sanctioned events with his or her rights and obligations clearly defined;

WHEREAS the PSO/MSO is recognized by _____ (the PSO/MSO's National Federation) and the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries as the sole Provincial Federation governing the sport of _____ in Ontario;

WHEREAS the PSO/MSO and _____ recognize the need to clarify the relationship between the PSO/MSO and the Athlete by establishing their respective rights and obligations;

WHEREAS the *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (hereinafter referred to as "the Ontario AAP") requires these rights and obligations to be stated in a written agreement to be signed by the PSO/MSO and the Athlete who applies for assistance under the Ontario AAP;

AND WHEREAS the National Federation requires that the PSO/MSO certify the eligibility of the Athlete to compete as a member in good standing;

NOW THEREFORE the parties agree to the following:

PSO/MSO's Obligations

1. The PSO/MSO shall:

- a. organize, select and operate teams of athletes, coaches and other necessary support staff (a Provincial Team) to represent Ontario in the sport of _____ at Provincial and National competitions;
- b. publish criteria for the selection of athletes to the Ontario AAP before the selection process begins for the particular sport;
- c. nominate all athletes who meet Ontario AAP criteria;
- d. organize programs and provide funding for the development and provision of coaching expertise, officials and event training centres in Ontario in the sport of _____ in accordance with the budget of the PSO/MSO;
- e. assist the Athlete in obtaining quality medical care and advice;
- f. regularly provide Provincial Team and Ontario AAP information (training and competition) to the Athlete in the form of mailed/emailed correspondence;
- g. provide a formal review of the Athlete's annual training program;
- h. provide funding for the Athlete for training camps and competitions in accordance with the budget of the PSO/MSO;
- i. provide and include in Agreement a dispute mechanism and related procedures/process that is in conformity with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, which shall include access to an independent arbitration process with respect to any dispute the carded athlete may have with the PSO/MSO related to or arising out of this Agreement.

Athlete's Obligations

2. The Athlete shall:

- a. recognize the responsibilities of the coaches in coaching-related decisions and follow the training and competitive program mutually agreed to by the following:
 - o the PSO/MSO representative responsible for developing and monitoring Provincial Team training and competitive programs (the Provincial Coach or High Performance Director, for example);
 - o the Athlete's personal coach; and
 - o the Athlete;
- b. avoid living in an environment not conducive to high-performance achievements or taking any deliberate action that puts his or her ability to perform at risk or limits performance;
- c. provide the Provincial Coach or his or her designate, by mail sent to the PSO/MSO, with an annual training chart and monthly updates of changes to the chart or any other appropriate information that the PSO/MSO may request;
- d. participate in all mandatory training camps and competitions as detailed below: **(NOTE TO PSO/MSOs: List all events here you require the athlete to attend, uniforms required, etc.) ;**

- e. notify the PSO/MSO immediately in writing of any injury or other legitimate reason that will prevent the Athlete from participating in an upcoming event referred to in article 2 d. of this Agreement and ensure in the case of an injury that a certificate from a medical doctor setting out the specific nature of the injury is forwarded to the PSO/MSO within three weeks of the injury;
- f. agree to compete exclusively for Ontario and/or Canada from one year from being enrolled in Ontario AAP (from date of receipt of Minister's letter informing athlete of enrolment), dress in the Provincial Team uniform and other official clothing, if applicable, while traveling or participating as part of the Provincial Team;
- g. avoid any action or conduct that would reasonably be expected to significantly disrupt or interfere with a competition or the preparation of any Athlete for a competition;
- h. avoid the use of banned substances that contravene the rules of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the rules of the International Federation and the Canadian Policy on Doping in Sport;
- i. submit, without prior warning, to unannounced doping-control tests in addition to other prior-notice tests and submit at other times to doping-control testing when requested by the PSO/MSO, Sport Canada, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) or other authorities designated to do so;
- j. avoid the possession of anabolic drugs and neither supply such drugs to others directly or indirectly nor encourage or condone their use by knowingly aiding in any effort to avoid detection of the use of banned substances or banned performance enhancing practices;
- k. participate, if asked by the PSO/MSO to do so, in any Doping Control/Education Program developed by the PSO/MSO in co-operation with Sport Canada and the CCES;
- l. avoid participating in any competitions where federal government sport policy has determined that such participation is not permitted;
- m. participate in sport-related, non-commercial promotional activities on behalf of the Government of Ontario. The PSO/MSO usually makes such requests for participation and arranges the activities. Unless supplementary compensation is arranged, these activities do not normally involve more than two working days per athlete per year;
- n. adhere to and comply with the PSO/MSO's dispute mechanism procedure in the event of a dispute relating to or arising out of this Agreement;
- o. actively participate in all Ontario AAP evaluation activities. Athletes will co-operate fully in any evaluation of the Ontario AAP that may be conducted by the Minister or anyone authorized to act on the Minister's behalf and provide such data as the person conducting the evaluation considers necessary for the proper conduct of the evaluation;
- p. spend the Ontario AAP funding obtained only on the following items:
 - o. Normal living costs;
 - o. Costs directly associated with training (e.g. coaching, facility fees, other athlete services);
 - o. Costs associated with attending training camps and competitions (e.g. entry fees, travel costs);
 - o. Sport specific equipment;
 - o. Tuition and education related expenses (e.g. books, fees).

3. Default of Agreement

- a. Where one of the parties to this agreement is of the opinion that the other party has failed to conform with its obligations under this agreement, the following shall occur:

- i. The one party shall notify the other party in writing of the particulars of the alleged default.
 - ii. If there exists a reasonable opportunity to correct the default and the default is not so fundamental as to amount to a repudiation of this agreement, the notifying party shall indicate in the notice the steps to be taken to remedy the default and a reasonable period of time to complete the remedial steps.
 - iii. The parties agree that the giving of the above referred-to notice by a party will not prevent that party from later asserting that the default was so fundamental as to amount to a repudiation of this agreement.
- b. If the party receiving the notice remedies the breach within the specified time, the dispute shall be considered resolved and neither party shall have any recourse against the other concerning the matter alleged to comprise the default. If the party receiving the notice fails to remedy the breach within the specified time and either party wishes recourse against the other concerning the matters alleged to comprise the default, that party shall use the dispute settlement mechanism of this agreement to resolve the differences between the parties.

All minimum eligibility criteria for athletes within the *Quest for Gold Program (OAAP)* apply to this agreement.

4. Resolution of Disputes

PSO/MSO and the ATHLETE agree that alleged breaches and disputes relating to this Agreement shall be dealt with as follows:

- a) In dealing with alleged breaches and disputes relating to this Agreement, time shall be of the essence.
- b) Information pertaining to alleged breaches or disputes relating to this Agreement shall be kept confidential. Except for disclosures to the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, which the ATHLETE and the PSO/MSO hereby authorise for the purpose of administering the Ontario AAP, such information shall only be disclosed to outside parties with the express permission of PSO/MSO and the ATHLETE, unless such disclosure is required by law, is mandated by the policies of PSO/MSO or the Government of Ontario, or is required by virtue of a contractual commitment PSO/MSO or the ATHLETE may have to another party or parties.
- c) Where the Provincial Coach, in consultation with the VP responsible for the High Performance Program, is of the view that the ATHLETE is in breach of any of the provisions of this Agreement, the ATHLETE shall be notified immediately by e-mail with a copy by regular mail. The VP responsible for High Performance shall be copied on all correspondence pertaining to the alleged breach.
- d) In the event that the Provincial Coach and VP responsible for High Performance cannot remedy the alleged breach within 14 days after the ATHLETE has been notified, the matter shall be referred to the President of PSO/MSO who shall, within 14 days, investigate and decide the dispute.

- e) In deciding the dispute, the President shall have the authority to stipulate specific performance to remedy the breach of the Agreement and/or to discipline the ATHLETE by applying any one or combination of the following disciplinary sanctions:
 - i. a written reprimand;
 - ii. removal of certain High Performance Program privileges;
 - iii. suspending the ATHLETE from further participation on the Provincial Teams Program, either for specified events or for a specified period of time;
 - iv. dismissing the ATHLETE from the Provincial Teams Program;
 - v. termination of this Agreement; and/or
 - vi. any other sanction that it considers appropriate in the circumstances.

- f) Where the ATHLETE is of the view that the Provincial Coach, the VP responsible for High Performance, or any other representative of PSO/MSO is in breach of any of the provisions of this Agreement, the ATHLETE shall notify the PSO/MSO President who shall investigate and decide the dispute in a timely manner.

- g) Any decision made with respect to an alleged breach of this Agreement may be referred to PSO/MSO's policies pertaining to the resolution of disputes, including the PSO/MSO Appeals Policy.

Duration of Agreement

This AGREEMENT comes into force on the date that the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries issues an Approval Letter announcing the award of Ontario AAP funding to the ATHLETE and shall be in effect for a period of one year from the date of that Approval Letter, unless terminated earlier.

Athlete Declaration

I hereby declare that in return for any financial assistance provided by the *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program, I undertake to fulfil all commitments and responsibilities outlined in the booklet “OAAP Athlete Handbook” and my Athlete/PSO/MSO Agreement. I agree to refund any assistance provided to me, should my eligibility status change or my carded status be withdrawn, effective the withdrawal/change of status date.

Athlete signature

Date

Parent signature (if athlete is under 18)

Date

PSO/MSO representative signature

Date

Announcement and Appeals of Athlete Selections

Athletes who have not been nominated for an Ontario Card by their PSO/MSO Selection Committee or who have been nominated for a 'Half Card' versus a 'Full Card', where applicable will be allowed to appeal that decision by filing a "Notice of Appeal" with MHSTCI. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Committee comprised of representatives from the sport community, selected by the MHSTCI.

Grounds for appeals will be limited strictly to issues related to:

- A) Whether or not the Selection Committee has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- B) Whether or not the Selection Committee applied the selection criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Issues related to the specific content or selection requirements contained in the PSO/MSO Selection Criteria are not grounds for an appeal and should therefore be discussed directly with the leadership of the individual PSO/MSO.

Please note that before an athlete can file a Notice of Appeal, he or she must first ask their PSO/MSO for reasons explaining why he or she was not nominated for an Ontario Card.

If the athlete is not satisfied with the PSO/MSO's response, the athlete may submit a **Notice of Appeal**, found below. A Notice of Appeal will only be accepted from the athlete or their parent/guardian on the MHSTCI-provided template (typed or hand-printed, no hand-written entries) through email, regular post, registered mail, courier or delivered in person. One appeal cannot be written on behalf of multiple athletes. The Notice of Appeal must be received by MHSTCI by noon on the deadline day. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery.

Once MHSTCI has received the Notice of Appeal, it will share it with the PSO/MSO, who will then submit a "**Response**" with MHSTCI by a specified deadline. The Response will outline why the PSO/MSO believes that the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete should be upheld by the Appeals Committee. MHSTCI will share the PSO/MSO Response with the athlete.

If, after receiving the PSO/MSO Response, the athlete believes that the PSO/MSO has raised new or additional reasons to justify the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete for an Ontario Card, then the athlete will have an opportunity to file a "**Reply**" with MHSTCI, responding to these additional reasons. The Reply must be limited to these additional reasons and cannot be used to make submissions already raised in the Notice of Appeal, or that the athlete neglected to include in the Notice of Appeal. The Reply will only be accepted on the MHSTCI-provided template.

Once MHSTCI receives the Notice of Appeal, the Response, and the Reply (if applicable), it will provide those materials to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will discuss all appeals at once. During its review of the appeals, the Appeals Committee reserves the right to request additional information from both the athlete and the PSO/MSO.

After reviewing an appeal the Appeals Committee will have the authority to:

- 1. Direct the PSO/MSO to redo the selection process using the correct criteria/process and submit a new list of nominated athletes;
- 2. Deny the appeal; or
- 3. Allow the appeal and nominate the appellant for carding status.

Once the Appeals Committee has reached its decision, it will contact the athlete and the PSO/MSO in writing to communicate its decision and the reasons therefore.

An athlete who has had his or her appeal denied is not permitted to submit a second appeal to the Appeals Committee on the same or different grounds.

Note: The PSO/MSO is encouraged to resolve disputes or disagreements informally with athletes who have not been nominated to avoid, wherever possible, formal appeals.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE – Announcement of Draft List of Ontario Card Nominations and Appeal Procedures

2019-2020 Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program

Draft List of Ontario Card Nominations Announced!

PSO/MSO NAME HERE is pleased to announce a draft list of athletes and alternates who have been nominated for Ontario Cards under the 2019-2020 Quest for Gold - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP). The athletes nominated were selected using the sport specific selection criteria developed by PSO/MSO NAME HERE and applied by (the) Selection Committee.

* List of Athletes nominated and category(s) go here, including alternates

Please note that this list is unofficial and is subject to change pending the outcome of any appeals and/or any re-selection decisions made by the PSO/MSO Selection Committee or the Quest for Gold Appeals Committee. As a consequence, this list should not be seen as final.

Athletes who have not been nominated and who wish to appeal this decision can do so by following the process below. Issues related to the specific content or selection requirements contained in the **PSO NAME HERE** Selection Criteria are not grounds for an appeal and should therefore be discussed directly with the leadership of **PSO NAME HERE**.

1. Before an athlete can file a Notice of Appeal, they must ask **PSO NAME HERE** for reasons explaining why they were not nominated for an Ontario Card. Deadline: **April 14, 2020**
2. **PSO NAME HERE** will respond to the athlete in writing by **April 16, 2020**

If the athlete is not satisfied with the **PSO NAME HERE** response, the athlete may submit a **Notice of Appeal**, found below. A Notice of Appeal will only be accepted from the athlete or their parent/guardian on the MHSTCI-provided template (typed or hand-printed, no hand-written entries) through email, regular post, registered mail or courier. One appeal cannot be written on behalf of multiple athletes. The Notice of Appeal must be received by MHSTCI by noon on the deadline day. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery.

**2019-2020 Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
Athlete’s Notice of Appeal Template**

Appeals will only be accepted on the MHSTCI-provided Notice of Appeal template. **Please refer to the appeals section of your PSO/MSO’s Athlete Selection Criteria document prior to completing this form.**

Deadline: 12 noon on April 20, 2020

Return form to:
Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1S5 **Email: questforgold@ontario.ca**

Full Name _____
Address _____ City _____
Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Sport / PSO _____

Reason for Appeal (Check all that apply):

- Whether or not the PSO/MSO has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- Whether or not the PSO/MSO applied the section criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Provide a two-line summary of the reason for the appeal:

In the space below, (continue on to next page as needed) provide the reasons communicated to you by your PSO/MSO as to why you were not nominated for an Ontario Card, and the date the information was provided. (Note: This Appeal will not be accepted unless it contains a response from your PSO/MSO.)

Date of PSO response: _____

In the space below (continue on to next page as needed), provide a detailed account of the situation to allow the Appeals Committee to understand the basis of the appeal (please submit additional pages/supporting documentation as necessary):

PLEASE NOTE that all decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Print Name of Appellant

Signature of Appellant

Date

All information provided to the Appeals Committee will be shared with both the Appellant and the PSO/MSO.

**2019-2020 Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
PSO/MSO’s Response Template**

Deadline: 12 noon on April 22, 2020.

Appeals will only be accepted on this MHSTCI-provided template.

Return form to:

**Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1S5 Email: questforgold@ontario.ca**

Sport / PSO: _____

Appellant / Athlete: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

In the space below, provide a summary of the reasons that you provided to the appellant/athlete explaining why your Selection Committee did not nominate him or her for an Ontario Card.

In the space below (continue on to next page as needed), provide a detailed account of the situation to allow the Appeals Committee to understand why your Selection Committee’s decision should be upheld (please submit additional pages/supporting documentation as necessary):

PLEASE NOTE that all decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Print Name of Authorized Signing Officer Signature of Authorized Signing Officer

Date

All information provided to the Appeals Committee will be shared with both the Appellant and the PSO/MSO.

**2019-2020 Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
Athlete’s Reply Template - Optional**

Deadline: 12 noon April 24, 2020. A Reply will only be accepted on this template.

Please note that a Reply will only be accepted if the athlete can demonstrate that his or her PSO/MSO raised new or additional grounds in its Response to justify its decision not to nominate the athlete and that these grounds were not previously communicated to the athlete. Please refer to the Appeals section of your PSO/MSO’s Athlete Selection Criteria document prior to completing this form.

Return form to:

Quest for Gold Appeals Committee

c/o Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division

777 Bay Street, 18th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1S5

Email: questforgold@ontario.ca

Full Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Sport / PSO: _____

In the space below, list the new or additional grounds raised by your PSO/MSO in its Response to justify its decision not to nominate you for an Ontario Card.

In the space below (continue on to next page as needed), provide a detailed response to the new or additional grounds enumerated above. Please limit your reply to these new or additional grounds. Any information that does not respond to these additional grounds will not be considered by the Appeals Committee.

PLEASE NOTE that all decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Print Name of Appellant

Signature of Appellant

Date

All information provided to the Appeals Committee will be shared with both the Appellant and the PSO/MSO.

Illness, Injury or Pregnancy

The *Quest for Gold* - OAAP Guidelines cover the following special situations related to illness, injury or pregnancy and:

- short-term curtailment of training and competition for health-related reasons;
- long-term curtailment of training and competition for health-related reasons; or
- failure to meet selection criteria for health-related reasons.

1. Short-term Curtailment of Training and Competition for Health-related Reasons

Health-related circumstances that limit training and competition for relatively short periods (i.e., less than four months) are a matter strictly between the PSO/MSO and the athlete and should not affect an athlete's Ontario Card status.

2. Long-term Curtailment of Training and Competition for Health-related Reasons

Carded athletes who are unable to maintain full training and competition commitments for periods longer than four months because of injury, illness or pregnancy will continue to receive 100% of the OAAP financial support to which they would otherwise be entitled, provided the following conditions are met:

- The athlete undertakes in writing to train or rehabilitate or both under the supervision of the PSO/MSO:
 - 1) for the period of time for which the athlete is unable to fulfil the training and competition commitments that are part of the normal Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement, and
 - 2) at a level that minimizes risk to the athlete's personal health and ensures optimal return to full training and competition at the earliest possible date.
- The athlete signifies in writing his or her intention to return to full high- performance training and competition at the earliest date possible following the illness, injury or pregnancy.
- In the case of injured or ill athletes, a positive prognosis for the athlete's return to training and competition in the sport within 8 to 12 months is required from a PSO/MSO team physician or equivalent.

3. Failure to Meet Selection Criteria for Health-related Reasons

At the end of an Ontario carding cycle during which an athlete has, for strictly health-related reasons, not achieved the standards required for nomination of carded status, he or she **may** be considered for nomination for the upcoming carding period under the following conditions, provided the PSO/MSO has a policy included within their selection criteria to prioritize and card injured, ill or pregnant athletes that is clear, consistent and not arbitrary (this policy must be transparent and accessible). Note: The PSO/MSO must be able to demonstrate the probability that the athlete being nominated would have been ranked high enough, if active.

Conditions:

- The athlete has fulfilled all reasonable training and rehabilitation requirements aimed at a speedy return to full high-performance training and competition during the period of his or her injury, illness or pregnancy and, despite making every reasonable effort to attain the applicable carding standards during the year in which the injury, illness or pregnancy occurred, has failed to do so, in the view of the PSO/MSO, for reasons strictly related to the injury, illness or pregnancy.
- The PSO/MSO, based on its technical judgement and that of a PSO/MSO team physician or equivalent, indicates in writing the expectation that the athlete will achieve at least the minimum standards required for carding during the upcoming carding period.
- The athlete has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate his or her long-term commitment to high-performance training and competition goals, as well as his or her intention to pursue full high-performance training and competition throughout the carding period for which he or she wishes to be renewed despite not having met the carding criteria.

4. Voluntary Withdrawal from Carded-Athlete Training and Competition for Health-related Reasons

An athlete may want, for reasons related to injury, illness or pregnancy or any other reason, to voluntarily withdraw temporarily or permanently from normal carded-athlete training and competition requirements. In these circumstances the PSO/MSO must notify the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, so that the athlete can be removed from the Ontario Carded list. The MHSTCI reserves the right to request the repayment of the whole or any part of the Grant.

Card Allotment

1. How many Ontario Cards will be allotted to each eligible sport?

The number of Ontario Cards allotted to each sport will be based primarily on the following (in priority order):

- 1) The number of athletes (male and female) that a PSO/MSO is eligible to send to the Canada Games as per the most current Canada Games technical package.
- 2) If not represented as a Canada Games sport, MHSTCI has assigned an allotment of cards based on the relative activity levels of the PSO/MSO as compared to other MHSTCI recognized PSO/MSOs that are receiving a carding allotment.

2. What about Sports where there are no women's or men's event in one of the three sets of Games designated for sport qualification (i.e. Olympic/ Paralympic Winter Games, Canada Games, Ontario Games)?

Where there is no comparable event for women or men in one of the qualifying Games -- women or men will still be eligible for Ontario Cards at the discretion of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. However, these cards will only be awarded if the sport organization can demonstrate that there is a high performance program for the gender in question and high performance competitions available to the athlete throughout the competition continuum (e.g. provincial, national, international competitions).

3. Can a PSO/MSO serving athletes with a disability provide an Ontario Card to an athlete's guide?

Consistent with Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program, guides are recognized for the sports of Cross Country Skiing, Alpine, Cycling and Athletics that serve disciplines with athletes with disabilities. These guides are eligible to be nominated for an Ontario Card, however the card must come from within the PSO/MSO's current carding allocation. No additional cards will be provided for this purpose.

Card Splitting

In 2019-2020 MHSTCI will allow PSO/MSOs to “split” up to 30% of their Ontario Card allotment so that they can issue “half cards” to athletes nominated in predetermined developmental categories. If 30% is not an even number of athletes, for carding allocations greater than 10 the number of split cards allowed will be rounded down to the previous even number. Allocations less than 10 will be rounded up to the next even number. Refer to your August 1 MHSTCI Memo for the exact carding allocation.

For example, a PSO/MSO with an allocation of 16 cards shall be split as follows:

$$16 \text{ cards} \times 30\% = 5.3 \text{ cards.}$$

This shall be rounded down to 4 split cards for a total allocation of:

$$\begin{aligned} &12 \text{ full cards} + 4 \text{ full cards split into 8 half cards} \\ &= 12 \text{ full cards} + 8 \text{ half cards} = 20 \text{ athletes overall} \end{aligned}$$

Parameters related to card splitting are as follows:

1. The decision to “split” cards must be approved by the PSO/MSO as part of the approval process for the PSO/MSO’s athlete selection criteria.
2. A card must be “split” by 50% - no more, no less, (e.g. one card must be split into 2 equal half cards).
3. The MHSTCI will not allow a disproportionate number of full cards or split cards to be issued to one gender over the other (See page 28 – Gender Equity Rules, for more information and clarification).
4. PSO/MSOs electing to split cards in a designated developmental category can only issue either all half cards in that category or all full cards in that category. The MHSTCI will not allow PSO/MSOs to issue any combination of full and half cards in the same developmental category.
5. The PSO/MSO must identify the number of cards to be split and in which developmental categories they will be issued when publishing/ posting its athlete selection criteria (See page 28 – Athlete Selection Requirements and Process, for more information).

**Dates & Deadlines for 2019-2020
QUEST FOR GOLD
Ontario Athlete Assistance Program**

DATE	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
March 9, 2020	PSO/MSOs submit Sport Specific Selection Criteria to MHSTCI for review (send as a Word doc, retain coloured fonts for ease of review)	PSO/MSO
March 11	Post Sport Specific Selection criteria on PSO/MSO website / circulate and make known to membership	PSO/MSO
April 6	Send Athlete Nomination Form to MHSTCI for review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • send as Excel doc • send signed version • attach ranking list with scores 	PSO/MSO sends to MHSTCI
April 8	PSO/MSOs publish DRAFT LIST of nominated Ontario Card athletes using MHSTCI template seen on page 51	PSO/MSO
April 16	Athletes complete Ontario Card Athlete Application Form and Electronic Funds Transfer application and submit to Ministry electronically (both are fillable PDFs that) PSO/MSOs collect signed Athlete Agreements for May 25 deadline	PSO/MSO and athletes
Appeals Process Deadlines:		
April 14	Athlete wanting to Appeal must contact their PSO/MSO for explanation of why they were not nominated	Athlete contacts PSO/MSO
April 16	PSO/MSO sends written response to any athlete who requested details of why they were not nominated	PSO/MSO replies to athlete
12 noon on April 20	Athlete still wanting to appeal submits <i>“Athlete Notice of Appeal Template”</i>	Athlete submits to MHSTCI
12 noon on April 22	PSO/MSO responds to any Appeals by submitting <i>“PSO/MSO Response Template”</i>	PSO/MSO submits to MHSTCI
April 23	Athlete receives copy of <i>“PSO/MSO Response Template”</i>	MHSTCI to athlete
April 24	<i>“Athlete’s Reply Template”</i> deadline – where applicable	Athlete submits to MHSTCI
May 20	Appeals Committee notifies athletes and PSO/MSOs of outcome of appeals	Appeals Committee
May 22	PSO/MSOs publish FINAL LIST of nominated Ontario Card athletes	PSO/MSO
May 25	PSO/MSO submits confirmation to MHSTCI that all signed Athlete Agreements have been received	PSO/MSO

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Definitions

“**Family Member**” includes a parent, spouse or partner including same-sex spouses or partners, child, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece or nephew, parents-in-law, sister or brother-in-law and includes a step relative of any of the foregoing;

“**Ministry**” means the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries;

“**Sports Organization**” means the Provincial Sport Organization (PSO), Multi-Sport Organization (MSO) responsible for governing the specific sport in which the Applicant or Recipient competes.

What is the Purpose of a Conflict of Interest prohibition?

It is important for the public and athletes to have confidence that PSO/MSOs are administering the Ontario Card – *Quest for Gold* - Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP) in an objective manner that is fair to the athlete. Sometimes situations may occur where PSO/MSOs may have a conflict of interest that could damage public and stakeholder confidence in a sports organization’s administration of the Ontario Card - *Quest for Gold* - OAAP.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

“A conflict of interest includes any circumstances where the PSO/MSO or any person who has the capacity to influence the PSO/MSO’s decisions, has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the PSO/MSO’s objective, unbiased and impartial judgment relating to the administration of the Ontario Card – *Quest for Gold* – OAAP.

What is a Perceived Conflict of Interest?

While a PSO/MSO may not be in an actual conflict of interest, the public perception that a conflict of interest exists or may exist can be equally harmful to the integrity of the Ontario Card - *Quest for Gold* – OAAP and its administration. The test question for determining whether or not a perceived conflict of interest exists is as follows:

*Would an informed person, having thought the situation through, think it possible that a PSO/MSO might be adversely influenced in its administration of the Ontario Card - *Quest for Gold* - OAAP under the QFG Agreement or Amending Agreement with the MHSTCI by its other interests?*

Examples

(Examples provided for illustration purposes only. Conflict of interest can occur in other scenarios not illustrated in following example.)

An example of an actual conflict of interest situation is:

A PSO/MSO has appointed an Athlete Selection Committee to develop its Sport Specific Athlete Selection Criteria (this criteria is used to nominate athletes for Ontario carding status).

One member of the Athlete Selection Committee is the paid coach of five of the sport's high performance athletes. The coach purposely influenced the development of the Sport Specific Athlete Selection Criteria so that his or her athletes would be nominated for carding status. As a result, once the Sport Specific Athlete Selection criteria were applied, all five of the coaches' athletes were nominated for carding status.

The coach sitting on the Athlete Selection Committee is in a conflict of interest. The coach stands to benefit financially if his or her athletes were awarded carding status because they could use their funding to pay for extra coaching costs.

The coach did not act in the PSO/MSO's best interests when the Committee was developing the sport specific athlete selection criteria. This Committee member should have declared a conflict and removed himself or herself from the process. Athletes who were not nominated for carding status could complain that the conflict on the part of one Committee member might have impacted on the development of the sport specific athlete selection criteria, thereby preventing them from being nominated for Ontario Card status.

An example of a perceived conflict of interest situation is:

A PSO/MSO has appointed an Athlete Selection Committee to develop its sports specific athlete selection criteria (this criteria is used to nominate athletes for Ontario carding status). One of the Committee members is an aunt of one of the sport's female high performance athletes. The aunt does not support her niece financially. The aunt was completely objective and did not purposely influence the development of the sport specific athlete selection criteria so as to increase the chances of her niece being nominated for carding status. However, it could be "perceived" or suspected by an outsider or other athlete that the aunt would have exercised some influence over the development of the criteria to favour selection of her niece.

It would be best for the PSO/MSO to avoid even the perception of conflict (or actual conflicts) by not having family members of prospective OAAP recipients sitting on the Selection Committee or taking part in board meetings when the selection criteria is being discussed and approved.

Procedures

Declaration of Interest

If any director or officer of the PSO/MSO, or if any family member of a director or officer of the Sports Organization has a material interest in the Ontario Card - *Quest for Gold* – OAAP, the director or officer shall declare such interest to the board and shall not participate in the discussion or vote on any resolution relating to the matter.

Other PSO/MSO representatives involved in the *Quest for Gold* Program (e.g. employees, volunteers, coaches, officials) apart from a director or officer, who has a material interest in the *Quest for Gold* - OAAP shall declare such interest to the PSO/MSO which shall determine whether such interest creates either an actual or perceived conflict of interest situation for the PSO/MSO – then take the appropriate action to rectify the conflict (e.g. remove individual from selection committee).