



ELITE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME GUIDELINES

1.0 Preamble

- 1.1** The Elite Scholarship Programme (ESP) is a facility offered by the Botswana National Sport Commission (BNSC) “the Commission” in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture (MYSC) and the Department of Tertiary Education Financing (DTEF) at the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MOE)
- 1.2** Established in 1997, the facility is meant to assist athletes demonstrating exceptional athletic potential and having also both attained a set minimum high school pass mark and having secured a university admission, with funds to pursue a dual career in sport and academics, at a university and/or country deemed to offer good conditions for the same.
- 1.3** The ESP seeks to position student athletes such that during the currency of their academic programmes, they could improve their sport performance such that they could win medals for Botswana at major international competitions, potentially secure sponsorships and/or endorsements and, post their studies, potentially turn professional within their chosen sports, amongst other options.
- 1.4** Over the years, the programme has assisted student athletes graduate with professional qualifications, with some of them subsequently rising through the corporate ranks in Botswana and others in the public sector, while others have continued to compete at the highest international level and brought Botswana glory in the process.

DTEF is responsible for cost of living and tuition costs, *among others*, while the Commission covers sport related costs through an allocation made from the annual subvention from MYSC.

1.5 The programme is managed through these guidelines, which are reviewed whenever necessary, based on the changing scope of sport, and the programme generally awards ten (10) scholarships in each financial year.

1.6 While these guidelines are generally what will guide the Commission in the selection of athletes and award of funding, the BNSC reserves the right to, where circumstances dictate, make exceptions.

2.0 Objective

2.1 The objective of the ESP is to award academic scholarships and financial support to identified athletes from both individual and team sports such that they could pursue a dual career in both sport and academics and in the process, improve their athletic performance for one or more of the ends that could be defined by the Commission (e.g., winning medals, turning professional, securing scholarships, etc).

3.0 Scope

3.1 The Programme covers Botswana athletes from any sport, registered or otherwise with the Commission up to the number of scholarships available in each year.

3.2 The programme generally covers some or all of the following as may be applicable:

3.2.1 Tuition Fees

3.2.2 Monthly stipends

3.2.3 Book allowances

3.2.4 Medical cover

3.2.5 Return air tickets where applicable and at intervals set out by DTEF

3.2.6 Sport Equipment

3.2.7 Sport training and competition

4.0 Eligibility Criteria and Exclusions

4.1 In order to benefit from this programme, athletes MUST:

4.1.1 be citizens of Botswana under the age of 21 years, provided that under exceptional circumstances, the Commission shall reserve the right to make awards to those aged over 21 years;

4.1.2 have attained the set minimum high school pass mark;

4.1.3 either be already admitted to an institution of higher learning before the final deadline for applications as set forth herein;

4.1.4 not be serving or have served within the two (2) years leading up to the application, a doping sanction;

4.1.5 either have been selected as a member of an age based national team or posted good results at recognised international competitions.

4.2 Under exceptional circumstances, the Commission may consider performance outside the standard two (2) years as set forth and may even consider individuals without medals at any of the levels listed above (e.g., athlete who clocks a recognisable elite time at a club competition in athletics, cycling, swimming etc).

4.3 Athletes must have undergone and passed medical tests defined by and at a facility determined by the Commission.

5.0 Conditions

5.1 The following conditions shall apply with respect to scholarships awarded under this programme:

5.1.1 Universities at which applicants desire to study would have to be approved by the Commission, after satisfying itself that they present a conducive environment for a dual career in sport and academics;

5.1.2 Once awarded a scholarship, an student athlete would be expected to attain both sport and academic targets, failing which the sponsoring parties shall reserve the right to terminate the scholarship;

5.1.3 Students athletes shall not change the course of study or the sport discipline through which they received the scholarship unless with the express consent of the Commission;

6.0 Application

- 6.1** In absence of a National Sport Association (NSA) registered with or recognised by the BNSC with respect to a sport, applications shall be expressly routed directly to BNSC.
- 6.2** Long lists of prospective beneficiaries shall be submitted to the Commission by end of September of each year preceding the expected funding cycle. This will be with a view to allow the Commission and respective NSAs, where applicable, to monitor the performance of identified athletes.
- 6.3** Final applications shall be submitted by no later than 30th June of each year and should include the following:
- 6.3.1 Detailed academic and sport profiles through the template attached as **Appendix 1**;
 - 6.3.2 Copies of academic certificates and transcripts;
 - 6.3.3 Copy of birth certificate, national identity card, and passport;
 - 6.3.4 Reference letter from NSA and coach addressing issues such as athletes' conduct, sport progression or any other pertinent matter that may need to be brought to the attention of the Commission.
- 6.4** NSAs shall submit the applications on a ranked basis, with the best athlete ranked as '1' followed by the second best at '2' and so on..
- 6.5** NSAs submissions must be accompanied by a resolution signed by no less than four (4) Board or Executive Committee members, one of whom must either be President, Vice President Technical or Secretary General.

7.0 Awards, Exclusions and Appeals

- 7.1** Applications received after deadline shall not be considered;
- 7.2** Applications shall initially be screened by the Sport Development Department of the Commission, producing a ranking of all the applicants and recommendations to Management;
- 7.3** Management shall consider and review submissions by the SDD and make appropriate recommendations to the Sport Development Committee (SDC);

- 7.4** The SDC shall, on behalf of the Board, shall make a final determination on the athletes or Teams to be awarded grants and the value thereof.
- 7.5** A preliminary (non-binding) list of beneficiaries will be published and a ten (10) working day period allowed for the filing of any appeals, noting that:
- 7.5.1 Appeals regarding ranking done at the level of NSAs shall be dealt with at that level;
 - 7.5.2 Appeals regarding the decision of the Commission shall be addressed to the SDC for review and in the event an appellant would remain dissatisfied with the decision of the SDC, they shall refer the matter to the Board who shall be the final arbiter.
- 7.6** The final list of shortlisted candidates shall be filed with DTEF for processing, noting that they reserve the right to reject some applicants on account of their own policies and procedures.
- 7.7 Contracts, Code of Conduct and Reports**
- 7.7.1 Upon approval as an Elite Scholar, each athlete shall enter into a contract of agreement with their respective NSA, stipulating duties, expectations, dispute resolutions etc.
 - 7.7.2 Each athlete shall enter into applicable agreements with the DTEF, with respect to the components of the scholarship they would be covering.
 - 7.7.3 Conversely, each NSA (or where applicable Clubs/Parents/Guardians) shall enter into a contract_of agreement with the Commission with respect to all their athletes or Teams receiving scholarships under this programme.
 - 7.7.4 NSAs or where applicable, Clubs/Parents/Guardians shall be expected to furnish the Commission with a technical and financial report with respect to each athlete/team, once every six (6) months. The reports shall cover amongst other things, athlete's performance, conduct, injuries if applicable and recommendations for any required interventions.
 - 7.7.5 Each beneficiary shall be expected to sign a Code of Conduct issued by the Commission.

7.7.6 The Commission reserves to right to revoke support for an athlete or recommend termination of the scholarship, on account of breach of contract or the Code of Conduct.

8.0 Management Committee

8.1 The programme shall be administered by the BNSC Secretariat through the Sport Development Committee, and managed in partnership with the Department of Tertiary Education Financing.