

Academic and financial benefits for student-athletes at a Brazilian Federal University

Junior Vagner Pereira da Silva*, Alex Caiçara de Albuquerque

Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil.

* Correspondence: Junior Vagner Pereira da Silva; jr_lazer@yahoo.com.br

ABSTRACT

The University is configured in a complex context. It encompasses a set of diverse people, among them the student-athletes, who, in addition to undergoing the academic activities inherent to the formation, still face the workload of training and competitions. Policies have been developed with specialized assistance to provide better conditions to the public. The aim of this study was to investigate the granting of academic and financial benefits to student-athletes at a Brazilian Federal University. This was an exploratory documentary research, with the technique of document analysis applied to resolutions, service instructions, ordinances, and proclamations. The results indicated that the University has policies for dual careers, although they are limited to academic and sports initiatives. The policies is materialized through standard rules and granting absence allowances to student-athletes in competitions representing the University, a monthly sports scholarship (R\$400.00) and financial aid for participation in competitions with an individual value of R\$800.00. It is concluded that the institution promotes dual careers through policies, although this is restricted, imprecise, and limited in academic initiatives; partially adequate in sports initiatives, with urgent readjustments needed in the value of the scholarship and the creation of actions aimed at retirement preparation.

KEYWORDS

Policy; Dual Career; Student-Athlete; Public University

1. INTRODUCTION

The training of a performance athlete requires five to ten years of preparation through training and competitions (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007), before reaching the sporting elite between 20 and 30 years of age (López de Subijana et al., 2014a). This path requires commitment and investment in hours of physical and technical training, which varies according to the particular sporting characteristics, with differences between individual sports (5.7 days/week) and team sports (4.6 days/week), requiring around 22.9 hours/week in individual sports and 12.3 hours/week in team sports (López de Subijana et al., 2015).

In university sport, dedication to training and competitions does not differ much from professional sport, as worldwide the weekly workload is 11-20 hours (44%) and more than 20 hours (42%) (Condello et al., 2019).

Besides the long periods of dedication to sport, student-athletes are subjected to an even more complex context than those who dedicate themselves solely to sport, since in addition to sports preparation they also face academic demands, which take up more than 20 hours/week (Condello et al., 2019), configuring what the literature calls a dual career - dedication to two routine activities at the same time, such as investment in sport and academic training (Maquiaveli et al., 2021).

Dual careers lead to incompatible schedules, locations and agendas, because while academic life requires face-to-face meetings for teaching and assessments on pre-established dates, sporting life requires intensive dedication to training and physical preparation, concentration and traveling abroad for competitions (Cifuentes, 2021), because the more they prepare and the more hours they dedicate to practicing and competing, the less favorable the conditions for professional training become (Heinemann, 1998) and the more successful they are in sport, more time they dedicate to sport and the less conditions they have for professional integration (Puig & Vilanova, 2006). Faced with the difficulties of reconciling studies and a sporting career, student-athletes sometimes suffer delays, failures, changes of shift (or school) and dropping out of school (Pedroza Júnior et al., 2020) or giving up their sporting career (Andres & Goellner, 2018).

However, problems related to time management are not the only ones that hinder dual careers, because the majority of student-athletes in this condition also have no professional remuneration, which is a problem, since they have expenses with gym fees, clubs, food, supplements, competition entries and travel, making them need financial support to maintain their academic and/or sporting life, such as scholarships and/or sports subsidies. It has been shown that Spanish student-athletes who

participate in pre-Olympics without scholarships face more barriers to dual careers when compared to those with partial or full scholarships (Mateo-Orcajada et al., 2022) and the loss of the scholarship figures as the main reason for abandoning sport (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012; Andres & Goellner, 2018; Conde et al., 2021; Haas & Carvalho, 2018; Miró et al., 2018) or academic dropout (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012; Miró et al., 2018; Pedroza Júnior et al., 2020).

Considering these barriers, policies and politics have been developed on the international stage with the aim of creating favorable conditions for dual careers, with regulation of academic, financial and retirement preparation initiatives (Aquilina & Henry, 2010). In Spain, federal regulations have been created that grant benefits to student-athlete (Espanã, 2001; España, 1998, 2007) , as well as in Colombia, which has federal regulations for benefits for medal-winning athletes in national, international, Olympic and world championships (Lágos Cortés, 2014). Private initiatives have also been produced by universities in Europe (France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain, Poland and Portugal) (Aquilina & Henry, 2010), Spain (López de Subijana et al., 2014a) and Colombia (Lágos Cortés, 2014), with academic, sports and retirement grants.

Bearing in mind the complexity of being a student and an athlete at the same time and the demands that each context imposes in order to achieve results, as well as the international implementation of programs aimed at mitigating these barriers, the research asks: Are there academic and/or financial benefits granted to student-athletes at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (FUMS) (dual careers)? What kinds of initiatives are aimed at student-athletes?

The aim of this study is to investigate the granting of academic and financial benefits to student-athletes at a Brazilian federal university. Specifically, it aims to analyze the regulations and programs related to dual careers; to diagnose the types of concessions directed at student-athletes.

2. METHODS

This is exploratory research, which allows for greater familiarity with the problem under analysis in order to formulate hypotheses (Gil, 2010). It is also documentary research, a type that analyzes primary sources—written, retrospective, and electronic public records from administrative publications (Marconi & Lakatos, 2002)—which have not yet been analyzed and were prepared during the period intended for analysis, enabling a more objective understanding of reality (Gil, 2010).

The research technique adopted was the one outlined for documentary studies, organized into 5 stages (Gil, 2010), as shown in Figure 1.

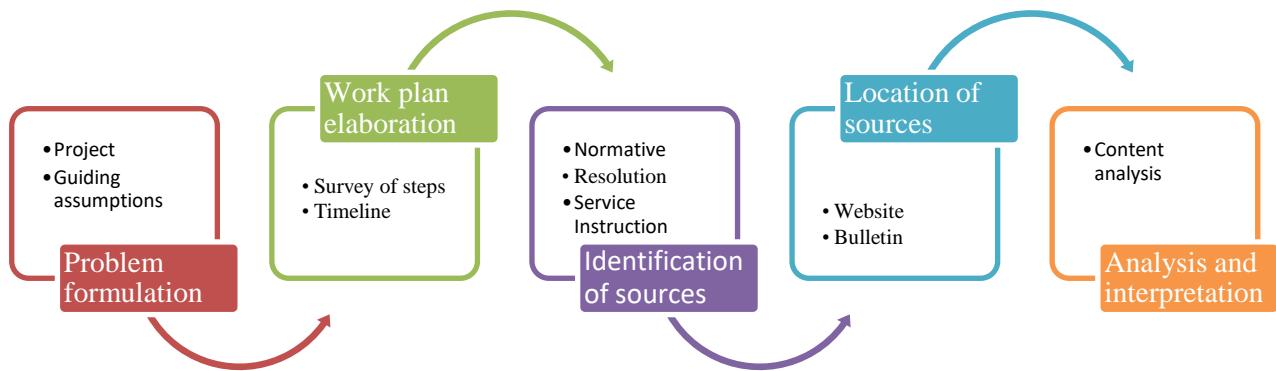


Figure 1. Research technique adopted

The formulation of the problem occurred during the elaboration of the project, with the guiding assumptions and the chronogram organized with the work plan. The identification of sources stage occurred with the survey of public administration documents (resolutions, ordinances, service instructions and notices) related to the granting of academic, sports and post-career benefits. According to Jannuzzi (2016), documents from the public administration are evidence that can generate relevant information and allow a situational analysis of projects and programs.

To locate the documents, free searches in the ABAS of the FUMS website, Brazil (<https://www.ufms.br/>) were conducted in order to identify norms related to university sports policies and politics in the institution, specifically those affected to dual careers. Searches in the Official Bulletin (<https://boletimoficial.ufms.br/>), with objectives of identifying programs or actions directed to dual career occurred between October and November 2022, resorting to the uniterms - athlete scholarship, dual career, dual journey, financial and academic aid.

The publication period of the researched documents was delimited between 2009-2022. Subsequently, the documents (primary sources) were located, being the corpus composed of: 1. general regulations of the undergraduate courses (Resolution no. 136-COGRAD/FUMS, of August 25, 2009; Resolution no. 550-COGRAD/FUMS, of November 20, 2018; Resolution no. 430-COGRAD/FUMS, of December 16, 2021); 2. Resolutions regulating the payment of scholarships and

aids (Resolution no. 133-CD/FUMS, of July 25, 2017; Resolution no. 144-CD/FUMS, of December 28, 2018; Resolution no. 169-CD/FUMS, of August 2, 2021), 3. Service Instruction for the creation of the Athlete Scholarship Program (Service Instruction no. 63-PREAE/FUMS, of August 15, 2013).

The interpretation of the documents occurred through content analysis, structured in four stages: pre-analysis, occasion of initial contact with the data; exploration of the material, with coding (choice of units), enumeration (choice of counting rules) and classification (choice of category); treatment of the data, by interpretation of the results (Gil, 2010). Based on the research objectives and problem, the writing of the documents were analyzed, and only being selected the paragraphs that dealt with to the policy academic, of scholarships and grants, financial aid. In addition to the information related to the themes, quantitative data available in the form of tables were compiled (maximum values by type of participation in competitions - student and event/group).

The interpretation of the data occurred through critical analysis, confronting the data with international and national literature on the themes, in order to advance the reflections.

3. RESULTS

The university that is the object of the study has norms that regulate three types of concessions - compensation for absences; payment of scholarships; payment of aid for participation in competitions. Therefore, it has a policy that disciplines the grants, specifying the types of benefits, conditions and criteria to enjoy them, values, duration, among others, enabling the implementation of projects and programs.

Until 2021, the institution had no regulations related to academic initiatives aimed at dual career, a fact that only occurred after the publication of Resolution No. 430-COGRAD/FUMS, December 16, 2021, in which the participants of sports competitions began to have the right to compensate absences (Table 1), provided that the participation occurred in sporting events representing the university.

Table 1. Policy of academic grants to student-athletes - FUMS/2009-2022

Year	Normative Act	Description
2009	Resolution n° 136- of COGRAD/FUMS, August 25th	<p>Art. 90.</p> <p>§ The student has the right to request a frequency recount, if requested, via the Academic Secretary, within a maximum period of five days after disclosure.</p> <p>§ The result of the frequency recount request should be filed in the academic record with the student's acknowledgement.</p>
2018	Resolution n° 550- of COGRAD/FUMS, November 20th	<p>Art. 61 A student who does not attain at least seventy-five percent attendance in the classes of a subject and/or participation in the pedagogical activities foreseen in the Teaching Plan will be failed due to absence.</p> <p>Single paragraph. There is no allowance or compensation for absences, except for some cases of students under the Special Regime.</p>
2021	Resolution n° 430- of COGRAD/FUMS, December 16th	<p>Art. 68 There is no allowance for absences at FUMS, except in the cases foreseen in the federal legislation in effect.</p> <p>Art. 69 There can be compensation for absences, in the form of activities, in the following cases:</p> <p>III - participation in official sports, artistic and cultural activities, representing FUMS;</p> <p>Sole Paragraph. Procedures for compensating absences will be established by means of a normative act issued by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.</p>

The initiatives related to sports grants date back to 2013, when through the Service Instruction No. 63-PREAE/FUMS, of August 15, the Athlete Scholarship Program was established, aiming to financially assist students who already had a resume as an athlete and who had achieved significant results in local, national, and international championships.

In 2017, internal norms were created to regulate the granting of all types of scholarships at the university, including the sports scholarship, providing a better legal structure for sports actions, such as high performance technical training for university athletes (Table 2). In a complementary way, from 2017 on, another initiative was promoted, the financial aid, which consists in the payment of small student expenses. However, the performance sports actions appeared as a category eligible for this benefit only as of 2018, with the possibility of receiving resources for participation in competitions, covering registration fees, accommodation, food, and urban transportation.

Table 2. Policy of scholarships and grants to student-athletes - FUMS/2009-2022

Year	Normative acts	Modalities	Concessions
SCHOLARSHIPS			
2017	Resolution no. 133-CD/FUMS, of July 25th	-	Art. 33 The Sports Scholarship aims to financially support academics for the development of Sports Actions aimed at serving the community in sports and recreational practices and/or high performance technical training of university athletes, characterized as Student Assistance, Teaching or Extension, according to the nature of the Action.
2018	Resolution nº 144-CD/FUMS, of December 28th	Extension	Sports Scholarship: aims to financially support students and employees in the development of extension actions aimed at serving the community in sports, recreation, leisure and/or high performance technical training of university athletes.
2021	Resolution nº 169-CD/FUMS, of August 2nd	Extension	Sports Scholarship: aims to provide financial support to students, civil servants and professionals from outside FUMS in the development of programs, projects and sports actions, approved in the scope of FUMS, which aim to serve the community in sports, recreation, leisure and/or high performance technical training of university athletes.
FINANCIAL GRANTS			
2017	Resolution no. 133-CD/FUMS, of July 25th	-	Art. 50 - Financial Aid may be granted to undergraduate students who are socioeconomically vulnerable, as defined by Law, through an announcement, in the following modalities: I - Permanence Aid; II - Food Aid; III - Daycare Aid; IV - Housing Aid; V - Aid for Participation in Events; VI - Pedagogical Instrumental Aid; and VII - Emergency Aid.
2018	Resolution nº 144-CD/FUMS, of December 28th	Institutional Development	Art. 29 - Financial Aid is characterized as the support granted directly [...] to regularly enrolled students for participation in scientific events or competitions representing the Institution or [...]. Art. 34 - The financial aid aimed at the participation, representing the Institution, may be granted in the following situations: III - student participation in competitions to pay for expenses of a preparatory nature and participation in events (registration fees, lodging, meals and urban locomotion); and

				Annex II - Financial Aid for Participation in Events and Competitions: aims to financially support FUMS students for the participation in [...], participation in competitions [...].
2021	Resolution 169-CD/FUMS, of August 2nd	n°	Student Aid	Financial Aid for Participation in Events and Competitions: aims to provide financial aid to FUMS students and staff for [...], participation in competitions or institutional representation.

The values of the financial aid granted were regulated in joint edicts of the Dean of Student Affairs (PROAES), Dean of Extension, Culture and Sports (PROECE) and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (PROPP), with subsidies for individual or collective participation (groups/teams) in competitions. The maximum individual values, since 2018 were set at R\$800.00 and those for participation in groups/teams, ranged between R\$10,000.00 (2020 and 2021) and R\$1,000.00 (2022), per event (Table 3).

Table 3. Financial aid policy to student-athletes - FUMS /2009-2022

Year	Modalities	Maximum Values per participation type		Regulation
		Student	event/group	
2018	2	R\$800,00	R\$7.000,00	Individual participation of the undergraduate student in external events to institutionally re-represent FUMS a) [...] other forms of representation (extension activities, of a [...] academic sports character [...]).
	4	R\$700,00	R\$8.000,00	Collective participation of undergraduate students in external events to represent FUMS institutionally a) [...] student participation in events [...] of a [...] academic sports character [...]. b) events of collective participation of students for institutional representation of FUMS [...] other forms of representation [...] academic sports [...].
	3	R\$800,00	-	Individual participation in events to represent FUMS [...] student participation in events related to [...] Competition Teams [...] and other forms of representation and/or extension activities, of an academic sports [...] character.

2020	4	R\$500,00	R\$10.000,00	Collective participation of undergraduate students in external events to represent FUMS institutionally a) participation of students in events [...], of a [...], academic sports character [...]. b) events of collective participation of students for institutional representation of FUMS related to [...], Competition Teams [...] or [...] other forms of representation and/or [...], activities of a [...], academic sports character [...].
	3	R\$800,00	-	Individual participation in events to represent FUMS or [...]. a) [...] student participation in events [...] and/or extension activities, of a [...], sports [...] character.
2021	4	R\$500,00	R\$10.000,00	Collective participation of undergraduate students in external events to represent FUMS institutionally a) events of collective participation of students for institutional representation of FUMS [...] or other forms of representation and/or extension activities, of a [...], sports character.
	3	R\$800,00	-	Individual participation in events for representation of U FUMS or [...]. a) [...] student participation in events [...] or other forms of representation and/or extension activities, of a [...], sports [...] nature.
2022	4	R\$500,00	R\$1.000,00	Collective participation of undergraduate students in external events to represent FUMS institutionally, [...] a) [...] or other forms of representation and/or extension activities, of a [...], sports [...] nature.

4. DISCUSSION

The policy refers to the material dimension – concrete contents and programs - (Frey, 2000). At FUMS, a federal public administration entity, policy is materialized through resolutions, ordinances and regulations, administrative-bureaucratic instruments of great importance to give publicity to grants and promote access to students to sport-related initiatives. This is because in Brazil, unlike what is evidenced in some European countries - France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain, Poland and Portugal - (Aquilina & Henry, 2010), Spain (López de Subijana et al., 2014a) and Colombia (Lágos Cortés, 2014) - there is no normative at the federal level that regulates grants to student-athletes, whether by bodies responsible for sport or education. In other words, there is no normative at the national level that regulates dual careers in the Brazilian territory, figuring, among the typologies proposed by Aquilina and Henry (2010), as *laissez faire*.

At FUMS, the documentary analysis indicated that there is policy structured in order to meet student athletes, although limited to academic and sports actions, two of the three recommended by Aquilina & Henry (2010).

The academic concessions are limited to the abatement of absences through the realization of compensatory activities, as urged by Resolution No. 430-COGRAD/FUMS, from December 16, 2021. This benefit is recent and innovative in the scenario of the Brazilian Higher Education Federal Institutions, given that similar measures were not evidenced in the national literature. Its implementation is of great relevance, as it gives greater freedom for participation in competitions outside the municipality, state or country, with student-athletes not being penalized with absences due to absence and, in theory, not depending on the benevolence of teachers for this benefit. According to (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012), when the allowance of absences or compensations are left up to each faculty member, and must be dealt with individually with the professors, students often do not find the necessary support.

The regulation of absences as a right supports that student-athletes are not forced to choose between staying in sports or in studies, since rigid regulations (Aguilar & Valderrama, 2020), the incompatibility of schedules (academic and sports life) and the difficulty of time management (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012; Raya Ramos, 2019), become barriers that sometimes lead to situations of stress, failure and abandonment of studies or sports practice (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012). Due to the conflict in being an athlete and a student, the allowance of absences for sports reasons was among the main demands of student-athletes (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012), with the flexibility of teachers being a facilitator (Guirola Gómez et al., 2018).

Although the existing policy on the allowance of absences through compensatory activities within the institution is important, it is restricted to sports events of institutional representation, which suggests leaving out participants of competitions by clubs or even in representations of federative entities (municipal, state, federal). Such a benefit differs from those promoted in Catalan universities, which encompass a variety of athletes - elite athletes who make up national teams and professional athletes; semi-professionals, called up by regional teams; third-division athletes with a high training load (Mateu et al., 2018). It also differs from the policy implemented by the University of Santo Tomas/Colombia, which, in addition to the relaxation of class attendance, grants other academic benefits for university representation in university games and clubs in regional, national and international championships and representatives of the country in international competitions, all

having the same concessions (Cantor, 2016), being models to be followed by higher education institutions in the Brazilian scenario, among them, the FUMS.

Limiting absence allowance to university representation at competitions requires three considerations. **First.** Brazilian Federal Universities, such as FUMS, host students who represent both Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in university competitions and clubs and academies in local, state, national, and international competitions. Therefore, reaching the athletic level of students and the competitions that the academic concession encompasses is of great relevance, because athletes who enter universities often have ties with clubs and academies that have trained them athletically for a long time and represent them in competitions. Creating favorable academic conditions for this public, besides strengthening the achievement of positive results in both, can contribute both to the reduction of sports dropouts and academic dropouts.

Second. Frequently, the Brazilian university sports calendar is limited to the municipal, state, and regional Modalities games and the finals of the Brazilian University Games (Jogos Brasileiros Universitários - JUBs). Not granting the benefits to participate in competitions representing clubs, academies, and the country can act negatively on the preparation for university representation competitions, as they should be used as a process to give rhythm. Furthermore, the limitation of competitions may make participation in state and international events unfeasible as a result of not obtaining the academic benefit in question.

Third. There is an inaccuracy in the implemented policy, once it is not established under which conditions the student-athletes will be able to dispose of the abondance of absences, what is the amount of passable absences and the procedures to be followed in order for the benefit to be granted. This is because, more than a year after the publication of Resolution 430-COGRAD/FUMS/2021, the regulatory act foreseen in the sole paragraph of article 69 has not been created yet. Therefore, the absence of normatization means that there is no institutional direction in relation to the issue, leaving students and teachers without knowing how to proceed. Still, it allows each faculty member to demand what he or she understands to be adequate.

That is, even though there is a norm that grants the compensation of absences on the occasions of sports competitions, each student has to resort to teacher by teacher, individually, so that the concession is made possible, which makes the benefits that this regulation may provide are not occurring, because according to Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar (2012), student-athletes who depend

on the faculty decision often do not find the necessary support. Regarding the issue, Costa et al. (2022) evidenced that the lack of faculty support was one of the main barriers to dual careers.

The academic initiative fostered by FUMS also proved to be limited, granting only the compensation of absences, offering no other benefits aimed at such initiatives, distancing itself from the recommendations of Aquilina and Henry (2010), which encompass flexibility in course entry requirements, extended completion time, individualized study schedules, alternative access to courses, and individual tutoring.

Robust academic initiatives guided by a set of concessions are present in the Spanish Career Support Program, which features guaranteed access to higher education, flexible exam times and dates, flexible class attendance, and the right to receive training and certification from their sports federation (López de Subijana et al., 2015). Similar policy was evidenced in a study developed with 10 Spanish institutions (8 public and 2 private), in which students are assisted with academic monitoring and guidance by university professors, who were also in charge of solving sports and academic doubts and promoted interlocution with the other professors in order to adjust the academic life of student-athletes; adaptation of academic activities and personalized tutorials; availability of teaching materials and online assessments; psychological support (Mateu et al., 2018). In Spain, academic measures via official support programs with personalized tutorials, flexibility in class schedules, and changes in assessment dates have been adopted in private and public universities (López de Subijana et al., 2014b).

In Latin America, Colombia has developed strategies, such as the allowance of absences, psychological support and flexibility in the delivery of work, even being consolidated in the sports legislation of the country since 1995 (Lágos Cortés, 2014). At the University of Santo Tomás, the Program of Accompaniment of student-athletes was implemented, granting the postponement/presentation under special conditions of assignments, written and practical evaluations, exhibitions, assignments of any nature; flexibility in attendance, with allowance for absences on dates of sporting events; advising and monitoring of academic enrollment, establishment of agreements with faculty, resolution of doubts and concerns regarding the procedural aspects of the monitoring program, regular meetings to evaluate the impact of the program, and facilitation of communication channels with faculty guidelines; recognition of academic and sports achievements by faculty; virtual support and proficiency tests in disciplines they judge to have mastered the content (Cantor, 2016).

Regarding sports initiatives, the FUMS provides the payment of scholarships through the Athlete Scholarship Program, created in 2013 with the aim of financially assisting students who already have a resume as an athlete and who have achieved significant results in local, national and international championships. The program is among the first created in Brazil by Federal Higher Education Institutions, which had the Federal University of Ceará, in 2010, through the Sports Incentive Scholarship Program, as a precursor (Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2010), followed by the University of Brasília (UnB) in 2011, with the Athlete Scholarship Program (Belato et al., 2019).

The regulation of the payment of scholarships in the institution and the insertion of the sports scholarship (Resolution no. 133-CD/FUMS, of July 25, 2017), as well as the existence of a program that financially contemplates student-athletes through aid for participation in competitions (Resolution no. 144-CD/FUMS, of December 28, 2018 and Resolution No. 169-CD/FUMS, of August 2, 2020), demonstrate political will of the institution's managers toward performance sport, especially since it is a public administration institution, a category of university in which investment in dual careers is still incipient in Brazil. According to Camargo (2004), political decisions involve the choice of priorities for a management, being financial limitations a factor that acts negatively. However, in this scenario of dispute and prioritization, even with budget restrictions, political will, according to Teixeira (2000), can determine the choice of a theme and the direction given to it.

In Brazil, historically, private universities have had a leading role in dual careers due to tuition rebates or receipt of scholarships (Coelho et al., 2021). Such condition was observed in a study conducted with participants of the JUBs in 2018 and 2019 (Quinaud et al., 2020). Not by chance, the efficiency trophy, which awards the 5 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with the highest sum of points during each season in the competitions fostered by the Brazilian University Sports Confederation has been won by private HEIs, with rare exceptions of the presence of public universities.

The promotion of scholarships in Brazil constitutes the main policy with regard to grants directed to student-athletes, making the sports initiative, among those suggested by Aquilina & Henry (2010), the most frequent and the one that has gained greater concern on the national scene. Therefore, the investment in sports scholarships existing at FUMS figures as an important political action and demonstrates to be ahead of the concern of initiatives evidenced in Spanish universities regarding the topic, given that López de Subijana, Conde Pascual, Barriopedro Moro, and Gallardo Guerrero (2014b) evidenced that of the 70 universities investigated (30% private and 70% public), only 34.28% (24) made scholarships available. Mateu et al. (2018) observed that only one, of the 10

Catalan universities investigated, offered student-athletes financial benefit. In Italy, University of Turin, Brustio, Rainoldi, Mosso, Lopez de Subijana & Lupo (2020) also evidenced the low investment in sports scholarships (1.68%).

Such a benefit is of great relevance, since it corroborates that those who are in dual careers have part of their sports expenses (payment of fees to clubs and academies, food, supplementation, sports materials, among others) funded, creating a favorable environment for permanence, since the receipt of scholarships figured as a positive factor to permanence in sport and university among Spanish students (Guirola Gómez et al., 2018) and was a demand of elite athletes linked to La Laguna University in Spain (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012). Also in Spain, pre-Olympic student-sportsmen without scholarships have been shown to face more barriers to dual careers when compared to those with partial or full scholarships (Mateo-Orcajada et al., 2022). On the other hand, loss of the scholarship has been shown to be the main reason for sports dropout (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012; Andres & Goellner, 2018; Conde et al., 2021; Haas & Carvalho, 2018; Miró et al., 2018) or academic dropout (Álvarez Pérez & López Aguilar, 2012; Miró et al., 2018; Pedroza Júnior et al., 2020).

However, the funding presents problems in relation to the value, since 2017 is maintained at R\$400.00, which implies a high loss of purchasing power due to inflation over this period. Although it is an obstacle that requires solution, since the value can no longer cover expenses that were feasible in 2017, it is complex and requires political mobilization beyond the sports context, because in the Brazilian Higher Education Federal Institutions all scholarships paid (extension, teaching, research, sport) have as reference the values funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). In this sense, the policy of the national research agency limits the amounts to be paid, this not only in FUMS, but in any Brazilian federal university.

An alternative would be to claim that the payments occur through the Federal Athlete Grant Program, developed by the Brazilian Ministry of Sports. However, evidence on the program shows that the alternative is unfeasible, since the value of the scholarship in the student category is R\$370.00 since 2011, therefore, also without readjustments (Brasil, 2011) and lower than that operated by FUMS. Moreover, the scope of the student category in the federal program corresponds to only 9.57% of the total scholarships granted (Corrêa et al., 2014). From this perspective, a national mobilization of students who receive federal grants could create a favorable environment for the monetary updating of these grants, because, as Teixeira (2000) states, the pressure exerted by society on a particular issue corroborates the incorporation of demands in the agenda-setting.

In addition to the payment of scholarships to student-athletes selected through public notices, as at the University of Brasilia (Miranda et al., 2020), the FUMS has a policy focused on the payment of financial aid for participation in sports competitions. The financial aid is intended for the payment of tickets (land or air), lodging, food, or registration, serving athletes individually or by team, limited to R\$800.00 per event. The availability of financial support for participation in sporting competitions was also evidenced by Abelkalns et al. (2021) in a study with student-athletes in dual careers in Europe, with financial support for participation in international competitions indicated by 48% as the fourth greatest need.

The availability of financial resources to cover part of the expenses in competitions is salutary, because most competitions require travel to other cities, states, or countries, and the amounts spent on tickets, lodging, and food are high and difficult to be covered by the student-athletes on their own. Besides the availability of scholarships, which gives some stability to the monthly costs of the student-athlete's life, the possibility of having the costs in competitions partially financed can increase the motivation to maintain a dual career, as well as stimulate the participation in a larger number of competitions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The institution that is the object of the study has a policy directed to the student-athlete, in order to favor the university sport of performance, being the same based on academic and sports aid. The creation of norms for academic benefits is recent, while that of scholarships is distant.

Despite being important, since it assures the student-athletes academic and financial support aimed at keeping them in sports, the policy of the institution is restricted, because it destines the benefit only for institutional representation, which may leave out competitors for clubs and even for the state or country. It is limited, since, in the academic aspect, it only grants the discount for absences, and does not offer monitoring/tutoring to student-athletes who need to be absent in order to make up for lost content; there is no provision for access to virtual content or the possibility of taking exams on other dates. It is also vague on the criteria and procedures for benefiting from the reduction of absences.

Despite the restricted, imprecise, and limited academic concession regulated by FUMS, the initiative should be valued, as it is innovative in Brazil. The institution advances in relation to academic initiatives for students, playing an important role in the creation of better conditions, especially given the fact that in the country there are no federal regulations for this purpose.

This calls for adjustments in order to meet their goals and to ensure that the student-athletes are better able to cope with the dual career. Among them a) standardization of concessions and benefits to student-athletes, in order to regulate them within the institution; b) opening of public notice of registration of student-athletes eligible for benefits; c) recognition as student-athletes people contemplated with athletic scholarship two years before entering the university, during the university course or athletes with awards in official events of the federations in the last two years or during the study period; d) disclosure to the heads of administrative units the list of student-athletes able to enjoy the program; e) granting the compensation of absences not only for athletes who participate in events representing the institution, but to all athletes in official competitions representing clubs, academies, the state and the country; f) making the accomplishment of tests and works more flexible by means of the delivery of a calendar of competitions every beginning of the semester, certified by the presidency of the federations or confederations; g) creation of virtual support mechanisms; h) nomination of teachers/tutors in courses that will attend the student-athletes; i) divulgation in the scope of the university, every beginning of the school year, the academic concessions destined to the student-athletes; j) publicization in the institution's web site the documents related to dual career.

In the financial realm, the operating values are outdated, which yearns for recomposition. However, for being a public administration university, the possibilities of change by the university itself are restricted, especially in relation to scholarships, since they are conditioned to values established by a federal agency linked to research. In this sense, we glimpse the following alternatives: a) increase in the amount of aid; b) donation of sports materials.

In the area of training for retirement, no initiatives were identified, which suggests the need for the university management to look closely at this demand and implement actions aimed at the transition between the sports career and professional insertion, since it appears as an open demand.

Finally, it is recognized the limitations of the research, because the data are restricted to a single university, which calls for future investigations to be outlined, in order to contemplate representative sample of the national scenario of HEIs, which will allow an overview of the dual career in Brazilian federal universities is obtained and that federal policies related to the population and theme in focus, at the academic and financial level, are drawn from the evidence.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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