

University of Central Missouri

Cheerleader Handbook of Policies and Procedures

PHILOSOPHY

The University of Central Missouri cheer program, known as the Cheer Squad, is a student activity. As a student activity, its first and foremost goal is to support and not to compromise the student's career. Secondly, the program should aid in developing each squad member into a responsible, mature individual.

The Cheer program is an athletic activity that will:

1. Provide leadership training;
2. Develop the student's ability to make responsible decisions; and
3. Encourage working together as a team toward a common goal.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Cheer team is to provide support to **ALL** Central athletic teams and the University. This support is directed in four major areas:

1. To raise the level of fan support for Central athletics by entertaining the crowd in an appropriate manner, to lead the crowd in positive support for **ALL** teams and project and solicit that support from the fans.
2. To serve as public relations ambassadors of athletics and Central, and to uphold and project the goals, ideals, and standards of the institution at **ALL** times.
3. To participate in the Cheer squad by incorporating jumps, stunts and basic cheer movements for the entertainment of the crowd at each athletic contest.

CHEERLEADER ADMINISTRATOR

The Assistant Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Services is the athletics administrator for the Cheer program and is located in Multipurpose Building Room 203. **All questions and concerns should be addressed first to the Coach** and then to the athletics administrator.

SQUAD DESCRIPTION

The Cheer squad consists of approximately fifteen to twenty - members. Alternates may be chosen by the Coach and receive a partial scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIP

The current spirit scholarship amount is awarded on an individual basis and is determined by number of years on the squad and eligibility.

- 1st Year - \$500.00 / semester
- 2nd Year - \$600.00 / semester
- 3rd Year - \$700.00 / semester
- 4th Year - \$800.00 / semester

To receive or maintain the spirit scholarship each Cheerleader must be enrolled in at least 12 semester hours in order to practice and perform. For the fall and spring semesters, squad members must earn 24 semester hours in order to be eligible the following fall – providing you earn a place on the squad. Cheerleaders are also required to adhere to the following eligibility standards:

Beginning your 1 st year on the squad	No GPA requirement
Beginning your 2 nd year on the squad	1.6 GPA requirement
Beginning your 3 rd year on the squad	1.8 GPA requirement
Beginning your 4 th year on the squad	2.0 GPA requirement

Please keep in mind that by University rules a 2.0 GPA will keep you in school. If you have two consecutive semesters below a 2.0 GPA you will be suspended. Failure to stay enrolled in 12 semester hours per semester, achieve 24 semester hours in the fall and spring semesters combined, and dropping below your GPA requirement will render you ineligible and result in written expulsion from the squad.

TIME COMMITMENT

Cheer squad members must be organized in order to fulfill student obligations and squad responsibilities. Commitments to the Cheer squad include participation in ALL PRACTICES and HOME GAMES (Football and Men’s and Women’s Basketball), ALONG WITH assigned fund-raising events, charitable functions, workouts, and study hall as scheduled by the Coach and/or athletic administrator.

Squad members will be given an athletic event calendar for each semester. Each member must schedule work, dates, sorority/fraternity functions, family vacations and other events around the athletic calendar.

Your first priority is your academics, after that, Cheerleading comes above everything else.

*The calendar is a working document and additions and deletions will be made as necessary throughout the year.

Cheerleaders ARE REQUIRED to travel with post-season play and are expected to perform at these games and make appearances in support of Central athletics. These dates typically include, but are not limited to, most University holidays. *This includes:* Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break. Members should plan accordingly. If only a limited number of Cheerleaders are permitted to travel, the

Coach will determine who will participate based on veteran status, grades, attendance, attitude and ability.

Practices are scheduled two times a week and additional practices may be required when determined necessary by the Coach.

*Additionally, Cheer squad members must attend camp in the summer.

PRACTICES

1. The Coach will determine the Cheer squad practice schedule.
2. Practices will typically be held two to three times per week.
3. The Coach plans the agenda for each practice session.
4. Cheerleaders will adhere to the Coach's agenda. Failure to cooperate with the agenda will result in suspension from the squad.
5. Cheerleaders must arrive appropriately dressed and ready to begin practice/performance at the scheduled time.
6. Work and personal business will not be excused and must be scheduled around any scheduled Cheer squad events.
7. Practices will run for 2-3 hours; the first half-hour set-aside for a coordinated warm-up to increase flexibility and fitness.
8. Along with practices during the week, the Cheerleaders will be required to run/workout on their own to maintain/increase their physical fitness.
9. Members are expected to come prepared and knowledgeable of the required material for that practice.
10. Semester break practices may be necessary. Should the Coach determine it necessary to practice over semester break, she will schedule the practices and these practices will be mandatory.

GAMES

1. Cheerleaders will arrive one hour prior to game time, dressed in the designated uniform (including shoes), ready to begin stretching and preparing for performance.
2. Complete knowledge of material is required for participation at games.
3. Abusive language or criticism of officials, Coaches, fans, etc., is prohibited and will result in immediate benching.
4. Upon advancing to post season play, additional restrictions may be implemented by the MIAA Conference and the NCAA. The Coach and athletics administrator will inform the Cheerleaders of any such restrictions.
5. The athletics administrator will determine attendance at away games. If it is determined that the squad will attend an away game, transportation by University bus or van) will be provided. If a Cheerleader rides the bus or

van to an away game, they must ride the bus or van back home. Cheerleaders will be permitted to ride home with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) provided the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) speaks directly to the Coach or athletics administrator prior to departing from the away sight.

6. At times, only part of the squad may be permitted to travel to away games. The Coach will determine who will travel based on veteran status, grades, attendance, attitude and ability.
7. Cheerleaders must be on the bus and ready to depart at the designated departure time.
8. See section on *Absences, Late Arrivals and Early Departures*
9. See section on *Expected Behaviors and Standards*

COMPETITION

Competitive events may or may not be a required responsibility of squad members. Should the Cheerleaders elect to participate in competitive events, the Coach reserves the right to select team members for this competition. Competition will require funding and/or fundraising by the student-athlete.

ABSENCES, LATE ARRIVALS, EARLY DEPARTURES

1. Excused absences/tardies or early departure from practice, a game or a performance are permitted and include class, sickness and death in the family. The Cheerleader must submit to the Coach a doctor's excuse for absences due to sickness.
2. Any tardy, arriving in the wrong uniform, leaving pieces at home will result in punishment for the entire squad to be determined by the Coach at the next acceptable time.
3. Missing a practice will result in an automatic benching for the next two games/performances following the practice you missed.
4. Missing a game/performance will result in an automatic benching for the next two games/performances following the game you missed.
5. Excessive absences/tardiness/arriving in the wrong uniform will result in benching/suspension or expulsion from the squad determined at the Coach's discretion. See section on *Benching, Suspension and Expulsion*.

EXPECTED BEHAVIORS AND STANDARDS

1. Each Cheerleader is expected to follow the University's Regulations/Policies which are published annually in the Student Calendar/Handbook. Violations of the Regulations/Policies may

result in, but are not limited to, disciplinary reprimand, probation and expulsion from the squad/University.

2. Uniforms must be kept neat and clean. Cheerleaders must turn in uniforms before the day of tryouts, clean and in good condition. Any damage must be repaired to the satisfaction of the Coach/athletics administrator or a cost will be imposed to replace the uniform. **All uniforms must be washed AS DIRECTED when handed out. Do not dry clean uniforms.** Failure to return uniforms or returning damaged uniforms will result in a hold on your account with Central which will prevent you from 1) getting your grades and/or diploma, 2) enrolling into courses for the next semester, etc.
3. Hair and makeup must be worn as described before the game/performance by the Coach. Hair accessories must be as provided/described.
4. Jewelry is NOT permitted. Rings, belly rings, bracelets or watches are NOT allowed. Tattoos MUST be covered.
5. The correct shoes must be worn to games/performances they are part of the uniform.
6. **Cheerleaders will have all uniforms and other items are provided.**
7. **Cheerleaders will be responsible for purchasing their own shoes all other items are provided.**
8. Cheerleaders must remain in good academic standing by maintaining a 2.0 cumulative grade point average and carry at least 12 credit hours per semester. Should a Cheerleader drop below 12 credit hours or should her cumulative GPA drop below 2.0, she will be suspended from the squad.
9. University of Central Missouri strongly opposes the use of illegal drugs, excessive alcohol and the use of tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco. The use of these products is specifically prohibited while on University grounds, while traveling to and from University events and while in attendance at University events.
10. Wearing of uniforms and/or Cheerleader jackets to any party or bar or participating in any illegal activities as well as smoking or consuming alcohol in this apparel is prohibited.
11. If a Cheerleader smells of alcohol or appears to be physically or Mentally unprepared to practice or perform at a game or function in the judgment of any athletics administrator or the Coach, immediate suspension will result.
12. **Cheerleaders should keep in mind that individually they represent the squad, Coach, athletic department and University and therefore act accordingly.**

12. Cheerleaders will be expected to remain in good physical condition. In addition to scheduled practices, Cheerleaders are expected to engage in cardiovascular/aerobic conditioning and weight training at the direction of the Coach. The Coach/athletics administrator will closely monitor excessive weight loss or weight gain.
12. See section on ***Benching, Suspension and Expulsion***.
13. See section on ***Absences, Late Arrivals and Early Departures***.

BENCHING, SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Failure to comply with the rules set forth in this handbook and the University's policies will result in benching, suspension or expulsion. Once a Cheerleader is benched or suspended, the benching or suspension continue until the Coach and athletics administrator have discussed the situation and made a decision to continue the benching or suspension, cancel the benching or suspension or expel the Cheerleader from the squad. The Cheerleader may or may not be involved in the discussions with the Coach and athletics administrator when considering final action to be taken. The Cheerleader has the right to appeal the decision made by the Cheerleader Coach and athletics administrator to the athletic director.

The benched Cheerleader will participate in practice and will sit in the bleachers in close proximity to the Cheerleader squad at games. The suspended Cheerleader will turn in all Cheerleader items and will not participate in practices or games until a decision on their situation has been reached. Expulsion from the squad requires all Cheerleader items will be turned in and prohibits the student from future participation in the Cheerleader program at Central.

Benching, suspension and/or expulsion from the Cheerleader squad may result from, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Unexcused/abusive tardiness; unexcused absences from practices or games; habitual arrival in incorrect uniform
2. Lack of enthusiasm, poor attitude or the inability to learn and perform routines/sidelines at the minimum standards.
3. Inability to follow the *Expected Behaviors and Standards*.
3. Behavior inappropriate for a representative of Central.
4. Missing the bus for an away game.
5. Violating policies set by Central and Central's Student Calendar/Handbook, the Cheerleader Coach and the athletics administrator.
6. Alcohol/tobacco/drug use which impairs the Cheerleader's ability to practice or perform safely.
7. Use of tobacco or consumption of alcohol while wearing any Cheerleader uniform, t-shirts, and/or jacket.

PHYSICALS, INSURANCE AND INJURIES

Each Cheerleader is expected to have her own primary health insurance to cover her for the entire school year. If you do not have primary health insurance, the University has insurance you may purchase. See the athletics administrator for information.

Each new Cheerleader must complete a physical. Each subsequent year you are only required to complete the yearly health questionnaire. These forms, along with an insurance questionnaire form, will be mailed to you during the summer, and you must return the completed forms to the athletics administrator prior to the first summer practice or before departing for summer camp. The insurance questionnaire must be filled out completely and accurately, and you must attach a front and back copy of your insurance card and your medical prescription card if it is different from your insurance card. Failure to submit this information accurately and completely will prohibit you from participating in practices, camps, and games until the information is submitted. Should your insurance change during the school year, you must complete and submit another insurance form with front and back copies of your new insurance card.

*****IMPORTANT INJURY INFORMATION*****

Should you become injured during practice or a game, you must be seen by one of the athletic trainers. If you are able to go to the training room nearest you, do so. If you are not able to physically take yourself to the training room, you must have another Cheerleader or your Coach go to the training room to have an athletic trainer come to you. The athletic trainer will determine if you need to be seen by a local doctor. If an athletic trainer determines that you should be seen by a local doctor, the trainer will give you an injury report form to take to the doctor's office with you. You are to return the injury report form to the athletic trainer after your doctor visit.

Should you become injured and the athletic trainer sends you for local medical attention, your primary insurance will pay their allowable amount. University of Central Missouri is the secondary insurance and will pay the remaining balance provided you have valid insurance with complete information and proper physical information. In order for Central to pay your remaining medical costs, you will need to bring all bills and Explanations of Benefits to the athletics administrator. Should you fail to provide proper and accurate insurance information, University of Central Missouri will not be responsible for your medical bills, however great they may be.