

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I ACADEMIC CABINET
FEBRUARY 6-7, 2012, MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Review of NCAA Division I Initial-Eligibility Requirements – Practice Requirement – Quarter Institutions.** The NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet recommended the NCAA Division I Legislative Council sponsor noncontroversial legislation regarding the application of eligibility for practice during the first year of full-time enrollment at quarter institutions. The amendment clarifies the cabinet’s original intent requiring student-athletes to earn nine semester or eight quarter hours in the most recent regular academic term.

2. **Review of NCAA Progress-Toward-Degree Standards.** The cabinet began its discussion regarding potential modifications to NCAA Division I Progress-Toward-Degree-Standards. The cabinet reviewed research specific to NCAA Progress Toward Degree Standards and will continue this review during its June meeting.

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative Items.**
 - a. **Initial Eligibility Core-Course Requirement for International Student-Athletes.**
 - (1) Recommendation. The Academic Cabinet recommends the Legislative Council adopt noncontroversial legislation specifying that prospective student-athletes whose initial-eligibility certification is based entirely on international credentials be exempt from the 10 core-course requirement set forth in NCAA Division I Proposal 2011-94.
 - (2) Effective Date. August 1, 2015, for students initially enrolling full time in a collegiate institution or or after August 1, 2015.
 - (3) Rationale. Due to the unique and varied international educational systems, it is in many cases not possible to determine or administer the 10 core-course requirement for international prospective student-athletes. International academic programs vary in length and determining the equivalent of “the beginning of the seventh semester” of secondary school is challenging. Many international countries have course progression checks built into their curriculum, even if students are only formally assessed at the conclusion of their educational path via leaving examinations.

(4) Estimated Budget Impact. None.

(5) Student-Athlete Impact. None.

b. Initial-Eligibility Practice Requirement for Student-Athletes at Quarter Institutions.

(1) Recommendation. The Academic Cabinet recommends the Legislative Council adopt noncontroversial legislation to modify NCAA Division I Bylaw 14.4.2.1 (eligibility for practice during initial year in residence). Specifically, the cabinet recommends that the existing legislation be modified to specify that: 1) an academic redshirt at a quarter institution must demonstrate academic success during the regular academic term immediately preceding the subsequent regular academic term in order to continue practice during the subsequent regular academic term; and 2) an academic redshirt who was academically unsuccessful during the first regular academic term may regain eligibility for practice during the third regular academic term by demonstrating academic success during the second regular academic term immediately preceding the third regular academic term.

(2) Effective Date. August 1, 2015, for students initially enrolling full time in a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2015.

(3) Rationale. As adopted, the new initial-eligibility legislation specifies that continued practice for an academic redshirt at a quarter institution is entirely dependent on academic success during the first regular academic quarter, with no impact on the opportunity to continue practice during the third regular academic quarter for failure to be academically successful during the second regular academic quarter. Currently, the new initial-eligibility legislation permits an academic redshirt who successfully completes eight quarter hours of academic credit during the first regular academic term of his or her initial year of residence to practice during third regular academic quarter of his or her initial year, regardless of his or her academic performance during the second regular academic quarter. Further, per the newly adopted legislation, lack of academic success during the first regular academic quarter eliminates the opportunity to continue practice for the remainder of the academic year, regardless of any subsequent academic success during the second regular academic quarter. For example, per the newly adopted legislation, an academic redshirt who earns eight hours during the first academic quarter, remains eligible for both subsequent quarters during the initial year of enrollment, even if the

student-athlete fails to pass any hours during the second quarter. In addition, an academic redshirt who fails to successfully complete eight quarter hours of academic credit during the first regular academic quarter of his or her initial year of residence may not regain eligibility for the third regular academic quarter by successfully completing nine quarter hours of academic credit during the second regular academic quarter. The cabinet confirmed its original intent indicating that the legislation should be modified to ensure continued access to practice is contingent on a demonstration of academic success at each immediate stage throughout the first academic year.

(4) Estimated Budget Impact. None.

(5) Student-Athlete Impact. None.

c. Initial-Eligibility Provisions as Common.

(1) Recommendation. The Academic Cabinet recommends the Legislative Council adopt noncontroversial legislation designating the college courses and multiple high school attendance bylaws as common. Specifically, the cabinet recommends that legislation be adopted to designate the following Division I and II Bylaws as common: 14.3.1.2 (core-curriculum requirements), 14.3.1.2.2 (nontraditional courses), 14.3.1.2.1 (English as a second language course), 14.3.1.2.5 (courses for students with education-impacting disabilities), 14.3.1.2.6 (grade value of core courses), 14.3.1.2.7 (pass-fail grades), 14.3.1.2.8 (repeat courses), 14.3.1.3 (test-score requirements), 14.3.1.3.2 (combined test scores), 14.3.1.3.3 (nonstandard test administration) and 14.3.1.3.4 (test-score report).

(2) Effective Date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. NCAA Division II Proposal No. 2012-13 modified the language of the college courses and multiple high school attendance bylaws to mirror Division I legislation. These bylaws will only be designated as common if Division I takes action to also designate them as common. Consistent with NCAA Division I Proposal 2010-55, in which those specific bylaws could not be included due to inconsistencies between Divisions I and II, designating the college courses and multiple high school attendance bylaws as common will provide similar procedures for the determination of initial eligibility without minimizing the autonomy of each division to establish its own initial-eligibility

requirements. There is some ease of burden for all involved in the initial-eligibility process by having these provisions as common.

(4) Estimated Budget Impact. None.

(5) Student-Athlete Impact. None.

2. Nonlegislative Items.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Legislative.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative.

- a. Report of the NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet.** The cabinet reviewed the report of the September 2011, meeting.
- b. Report of the NCAA Division I Board of Directors Meeting.** The cabinet reviewed the report of the October 2011 and January 2012, meetings.
- c. Report of the NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance.** The cabinet reviewed the report of the October 2011, meeting and January 2012, teleconference.
- d. Educational Materials Provided to the Membership.** The cabinet reviewed the materials developed to assist the membership in understanding the academic changes adopted by the Board during its October 2011, meeting.
- e. Review of Division I Initial-Eligibility Requirements.** The cabinet discussed the impact of the increased initial-eligibility standards adopted by the Board in October 2011, on select areas. Specifically:

- (1) The cabinet had a preliminary discussion regarding the application of the academic redshirt designation to additional bylaw provisions. The cabinet

recommended NCAA staff identify the potential advantages and disadvantages associated with the application of the academic redshirt designation to additional bylaw provisions in the areas of recruiting and transfers. The cabinet agreed to revisit the application of the academic redshirt designation to specific bylaws during its June meeting.

- (2) The cabinet discussed the academic redshirt concept within the context of a clock-extension/five-year rule waiver request. The cabinet noted that current five-year rule waiver legislation specifies that a student-athlete's inability to participate in intercollegiate athletics for more than one season in his or her sport within the five-year period due to failure to meet NCAA academic requirements is considered a circumstance within the control of the student-athlete. The cabinet determined that academic redshirt status should be viewed as a circumstance within the control of the student-athlete, consistent with the current five-year rule waiver legislation. The cabinet recommends the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Reinstatement Committee continue to review waivers using its current analysis.

f. Review of Academic-Eligibility Requirements for Two-Year College Transfers.

- (1) The cabinet approved the continuation of a modified data collection process for 2-4 transfer data collection as part of the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP). The data provides valuable insights on the academic profile of a successful two-year college transfer student-athletes and was instrumental in the formation of the new 2-4 transfer requirements. The cabinet did eliminate three components of the collection to reduce the administrative burden on member institutions.
- (2) The cabinet approved amendments to the NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet Policies and Operating Procedures and the NCAA Division I Progress Toward Degree Committee Policies and Procedures consistent with the changes adopted by the Board in October. Specifically, the polices were adopted to reflect the formation of a new subcommittee to hear 2-4 transfer waivers.
- (3) The cabinet continued its discussion of the academic year of readiness. Recognizing concerns raised by the membership, the cabinet supports the formation of a small group to further review the year of academic readiness. The group will consist of representation from the NCAA membership, including the Academic Cabinet and NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance, and the 2-year college community.

- g. Initial-Eligibility Waiver Directive.** The cabinet approved proposed amendments to the current initial-eligibility waiver directive (Attachment A). The cabinet supported a process that takes into account a data-based analysis of a student-athlete's likelihood of academic success during his or her first year of full-time collegiate enrollment at a member institution based on the student-athlete's core-course grade-point average, core-course units and standardized test score.
- h. National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletes (N4A).** The cabinet received an in-person report from the president and president-elect of N4A, Joe Lucky, University of Memphis and Bart Byrd, Baylor University. The report noted N4A reactions to the newly adopted initial-eligibility legislation, provided feedback regarding the year of academic readiness, emphasized the importance of skill-based academic preparation, and encouraged discussion regarding the potential expansion of exceptions to the full-time enrollment requirements for practice. N4A engaged the cabinet in a conversation related to the best ways to support student-athletes during the academic redshirt year. N4A will develop strategies and best practices for the academic redshirt year to be shared with the cabinet.
- i. NCAA Working Group on the Collegiate Model -- Rules.** The cabinet received an update on the NCAA Working Group on the Collegiate Model -- Rules and provided feedback on the principles developed for NCAA Division I Bylaws 14 and 23. The cabinet supported the creation of an operating bylaw that focuses solely on academic-specific legislation and encouraged the movement of legislation that does not directly support academic success to other operating bylaws.
- j. NCAA Enforcement Working Group.** The cabinet received an update on the NCAA Enforcement Working Group and provided feedback. The cabinet commended the working group's progress with creating a multilevel NCAA rules violation structure, an enhanced penalty structure for NCAA rules infractions and for making efforts to expedite cases.
- k. NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Program.** The cabinet received an update on the work of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification and provided feedback. The cabinet supported the central purpose of the Institutional Performance Program, which shall be to facilitate member institutions in reviewing their athletics programs based on identified measures that align with the core values and principles of the NCAA and the institution's mission.

- l. Progress-Toward-Degree Standards Review.** The cabinet began its review of progress-toward-degree standards and examined research regarding college academic outcomes of student-athletes. The cabinet noted the importance of maintaining progress-toward-degree standards that increase the likelihood of graduation within a five-year period. The cabinet agreed to further discuss potential increases to the progress-toward-degree standards during its June meeting.

- m. Eligibility for Postseason Competition between Terms for Multiple Round Events.** The cabinet engaged in a preliminary discussion to determine whether a student-athlete should be certified as having satisfactorily completed six credit hours during the preceding regular academic term to maintain eligibility for competition in subsequent rounds of an NCAA championship that is contested between terms. The cabinet expressed concern that a student-athlete, under current legislation, may engage in NCAA championship activity after failing to successfully complete a minimum of six credit hours during the preceding regular academic term. The cabinet agreed to revisit the issue in June.

- n. Football Nine-Hour Requirement.** The cabinet received an update regarding recent interpretive requests and educational efforts related to the nine-hour rule.

Committee Chair: Herman Holt, Jr., University of North Carolina, Asheville, Big South Conference

*Staff Liaisons: Diane Dickman, Academic and Membership Affairs
Alex Smith, Academic and Membership Affairs
Jennifer Strawley, Academic and Membership Affairs*

NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet February 6-7, 2012, Meeting	
ATTENDEES	ABSENTEES
Tom Adair, Texas A&M University, College Station, Big 12 Conference	Eric Hall, Elon University, Southern Conference
Carray Banks, Norfolk State University, Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	
John Bruno, The Ohio State University, Big Ten Conference	
Thomas Burman, University of Wyoming, Mountain West Conference	

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Carolyn Callahan, University of Virginia, Atlantic Coast Conference	
Barbara Church, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference	
David Dosser, East Carolina University, Conference USA	
Donna Heinel, University of Southern California, Pacific-12 Conference	
Herman Holt, Jr., University of North Carolina, Asheville, Big South Conference	
Loretta Lamar, U.S. Naval Academy, Patriot League	
Deland Myers, North Dakota State University, Summit League	
Jackie Mynarski, Mid-American Conference	
Annette O'Connor, LaSalle University, Atlantic 10 Conference	
Cinnamon Sheffield, University of North Texas, Sun Belt Conference	
Sean Simmons, Robert Morris University, Northeast Conference	
Shannon Strahl, Gonzaga University, West Coast Conference	
Lloyd Taylor, The Citadel, Southern Conference	
Bradley Teague, University of Central Arkansas, Southland Conference	
Kaitlyn Vincek, Eastern Michigan University, Mid-American Conference, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee	
Ken White, Utah State University, Western Athletic Conference	
David Williams, Vanderbilt University, Southeastern Conference	
Elaine Wise, University of Louisville, Big East Conference	
NCAA staff liaisons in attendance: Diane Dickman, Tom Paskus, Alex Smith and Jennifer Strawley	

Other guests in attendance: Bard Byrd, Baylor University and Joe Luckey, National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletes	
Other NCAA staff members in attendance for portions of the meeting: Steve Clar, Shauna Cobb, Greg Dana, Gary deCastro, Michelle Hosick, Juliette Kenny, Kevin Lennon, Andy Louthain, Binh Nguyen, Todd Petr, Bill Regan, Molly Richman, Tiese Roxbury, John Shukie, Laura Wurtz and Katy Yurk	

**ACADEMIC AND MEMBERSHIP AFFAIRS
STUDENT-ATHLETE ACADEMIC TEAM DIRECTIVE
INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY WAIVERS**

1. Overview.

The legislated initial-eligibility standards establish a minimal level of academic achievement necessary to receive athletically related aid, practice and compete in a student-athlete's first year of full-time collegiate enrollment at a four-year NCAA institution. If a student-athlete fails to satisfy these standards the presumption is that he or she is not adequately academically prepared for the rigors of athletics competition and/or practice in the first year of full-time collegiate enrollment. In creating the initial-eligibility standards, the Division I and Division II membership have determined the baseline standards that a student-athlete should meet in order to be academically eligible. These standards are used as a proxy for the academic readiness of a student to be academically successful during the first year of full-time collegiate enrollment at a four-year NCAA institution. As it is a proxy, there may be instances where a student-athlete has demonstrated that he or she is academically prepared to succeed at a four-year NCAA institution but has not met the legislated standards.

The goal of the initial-eligibility waiver process is to provide student-athletes relief from the legislated initial-eligibility standards in cases where such relief is warranted. This document outlines the cases for which relief may be granted. Institutions seeking an initial-eligibility waiver on behalf of a student-athlete for relief of NCAA Bylaws 14.3.1.2 (core-curriculum requirement) and/or 14.3.1.3 (test-score/grade-point average requirement) must present evidence as outlined herein.

The NCAA Division I Board of Directors has adopted legislation that raises the initial academic-eligibility standards for competition, effective August 1, 2015, reinforcing the importance of academic readiness for entering Division I student-athletes. Therefore, within the initial-eligibility waiver process, the threshold for full relief (i.e., receipt of athletically related financial aid, practice *and competition*) will be set correspondingly high.

2. Initial-Eligibility Data Analysis.

Initial academic-eligibility standards have been set based on the extensive review of longitudinal data regarding the academic success of student-athletes. Similarly, the initial-eligibility waiver process will take into account a data-based analysis of a student-athlete's likelihood of academic success in his or her first year at an NCAA institution based on the student-athlete's core-course grade-point average, core-course units and standardized test score. For student-athletes that do not meet the obvious waiver criteria (see Section 3 below), the NCAA staff will employ this research-based academic formula as part of its analysis of waiver requests to determine whether relief is warranted.

3. Obvious Waivers.

- There may be some instances in which student-athletes fail to meet the prescribed initial-eligibility standards but have demonstrated a clear level of academic readiness. To that end, a student-athlete with the following academic record is likely to receive a waiver for full initial eligibility:
 - (1) A minimum SAT of 1000 or ACT of 85; and
 - (2) A core-course grade-point average of 3.000 or higher; and
 - (3) A minimum of 15 core courses in Division I or 13 core courses in Division II (must have at least three in English, two in mathematics, two in natural or physical science, one additional English, mathematics, or natural or physical science and seven/five additional core courses in any subject area).

4. Academic Criteria Considered.

- a. If a student-athlete fails to satisfy all of the above obvious waiver criteria, the staff may still consider the following components of the student-athlete's academic record.
 - (1) All SAT/ACT exams, including residual exams administered on campus or subject-area exams (e.g., SAT Subject Tests).
 - (2) Performance in college courses completed prior to initial full-time enrollment.
 - (3) Performance on institutional placement exams.
 - (4) Student-athlete's collegiate course schedule, including placement level.
 - (5) The history and timing of completed core courses during the student-athlete's secondary school enrollment.
 - (6) For international student-athletes from exam-based countries, year-to-year performance as indicated on official transcripts.

- (7) Other elements of a student-athlete's academic record as determined by staff on a case-by-case basis. Such elements may include:
 - (a) The rigor of the courses taken by the student-athlete.
 - (b) Trending of the student-athlete's academic performance throughout his or her high school years.
- b. The following academic credentials will NOT be considered as part of an initial-eligibility waiver:
 - (1) Coursework that does not satisfy the legislated definition of a core course. For example if a student-athlete completes coursework that is deemed not core through the core-course review process, this coursework will not be considered as part of the initial-eligibility waiver.
 - (2) Coursework that was invalidated through the prospective student-athlete review process. For example, if a student takes courses that are subsequently invalidated through the prospective student-athlete review process and; therefore, unusable in the initial-eligibility certification process, this coursework will not be considered as part of the initial-eligibility waiver.
 - (3) College-level coursework. Although the staff may consider documentation regarding the student-athlete's potential to be successful at a collegiate institution, it cannot consider coursework completed as a full-time college student unless that coursework is acceptable coursework for initial-eligibility purposes. In the context of a conditional waiver, the staff may condition relief on the attainment of a certain academic record during the student-athlete's first full-time term of collegiate enrollment.

5. Required Documentation.

Institutions are required to provide, at a minimum, the following supporting documentation with all initial-eligibility waiver requests:

- a. A completed initial-eligibility waiver application via the AMA Online Case Management System;
- b. All SAT and/or ACT scores, including any scores not listed on the NCAA Eligibility Center final certification report;

- c. Letters or statements from the institution and student-athlete explaining the reasons for the deficiency;
- d. Evidence of the student-athlete's academic record as outlined in the Data Analysis section;
- e. Evidence of the compelling mitigating circumstance(s), if any, supporting the waiver request;
- f. The student-athlete's final certification report from the NCAA Eligibility Center website, if applicable;
- g. A copy of the student-athlete's transcript from each high school program attended; and
- h. If applicable, an academic support plan that demonstrates how the student-athlete's individual efforts, course-schedule planning and use of academic resources (including appropriate accommodations for any education-impacting disability), will position the student-athlete to succeed academically during his or her initial year of full-time collegiate enrollment. An acceptable academic support plan must be signed by both the student-athlete and an institutional representative with academic oversight for the student-athlete.

An academic support plan is required in all cases for which the high school core-course grade-point average is below 2.300. In addition, the NCAA staff reserves the right to require an academic support plan be submitted for any initial-eligibility waiver.

6. Information to Be Considered.

When reviewing an initial-eligibility waiver, the staff may consider any information submitted by the applicant institution. In addition to the required supporting documents, the following may be provided or requested by the staff:

- a. Letters of recommendation or support;
- b. Student-athlete's signed, written statement;
- c. For waivers other than education-impacting disability waivers, case precedent provided by the applicant institution;

- d. Evidence of misadvisement or a lack of advisement by the student-athlete's high school or by an NCAA member institution; and
- e. Other information as requested.

7. Staff Decisions.

In analyzing all initial-eligibility waiver cases, the staff will review the student-athlete's academic record and weigh the student-athlete's academic record against the initial-eligibility deficiency and the mitigating circumstances presented as reasons for that deficiency.

a. Approvals.

As noted in the overview of the directive the threshold for receipt of a full approval is high for Division I student-athletes, in light of the recently adopted increase in initial-eligibility standards. The staff is granted the authority to approve waivers of initial-eligibility requirements as follows:

- (1) When a student-athlete's academic record clearly demonstrates he or she is academically prepared for college-level work, as noted in the obvious waivers section of the document.
- (2) Absent attainment of the obvious waiver criteria, when mitigating circumstances for a deficiency are presented such that absent those circumstances it is clearly evident that initial-eligibility requirements would have been met, a waiver may be approved.
- (3) Special Circumstances: Rarely, circumstances surrounding a waiver request are so unusual that the NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet and NCAA Division II Academic Requirements Committee have authorized a “staff special” approval. These are unlikely to ever be replicated given the highly unusual nature of the circumstances but warrant relief. Such cases are reported annually for review to the Academic Cabinet and Academic Requirements Committee.

b. Partial Approvals.

The staff is granted the authority to partially approve waivers of initial-eligibility requirements in those circumstances that do not meet the criteria for either approval or denial.

- (1) When a student-athlete's academic record does not meet the obvious waiver criteria and, based on the use of data analysis noted, does not project a likelihood of academic success during the initial year of full-time collegiate enrollment, but, there are mitigating circumstances present to warrant a partial waiver of initial-eligibility requirements, a waiver may be partially approved to permit the receipt of athletically related financial aid only.
- (2) When a student-athlete's academic record does not meet the obvious waiver criteria but, based on the use of data analysis noted, demonstrates a likelihood of academic success during the initial year of full-time collegiate enrollment, and/or there are mitigating circumstances present to warrant a partial waiver of initial-eligibility requirements, a waiver may be partially approved for athletically related financial aid and practice.

The staff is also granted the authority to partially approve a waiver to allow for receipt of athletically related financial aid and limited participation in practice activities when his or her academic record, based on the data-analysis noted, minimally demonstrates a likelihood of academic success during the initial year of full-time collegiate enrollment, but there are mitigating circumstances present to warrant such a partial waiver of initial-eligibility requirements.

c. Conditional Approvals.

The staff is granted the authority to conditionally provide relief for waivers of initial-eligibility requirements as follows:

- (1) When a student-athlete graduates from high school and enrolls early in a collegiate institution; and
- (2) When the student-athlete's academic record demonstrates his or her academic readiness for college-level work, staff may partially approve an initial-eligibility waiver for the student-athlete to receive athletically related financial aid during the initial term of enrollment.

Further, the staff may condition partial approval of a waiver to permit athletically related financial aid and practice during the following term, or full approval of the waiver on the successful completion of academic requirements as determined by staff during the student-athlete's initial term in residence.

d. Denials.

The staff is granted the authority to deny waivers of initial-eligibility requirements as follows:

- When a student-athlete's academic record does not meet the legislated standards for initial eligibility and:
 - (a) No mitigating circumstances are presented;
 - (b) The mitigating circumstances are insufficient or do not tie directly to the deficiency; and/or
 - (c) The student-athlete's academic record does not warrant partial relief.

8. Written Misadvisement Plans.

Misadvisement and lack of advisement by member institutions and high schools is not, unto itself, sufficient mitigation to warrant a full approval of initial-eligibility standards. In order for misadvisement and/or lack of advisement to serve as sufficient mitigation to warrant a full approval of initial-eligibility standards, the documentation received must *clearly demonstrate* that the student-athlete would have satisfied all initial-eligibility requirements absent the misadvisement and/or lack of advisement. Misadvisement and lack of advisement are not sufficient mitigation to provide full relief in cases where a student-athlete presents a core-course grade-point average/test score deficiency.

a. Institutional Misadvisement/Lack of Advisement.

In all initial-eligibility waivers citing institutional misadvisement or lack of institutional advisement as a mitigating circumstance, staff has the discretion on a case-by-case basis to request the following supporting documentation:

- (1) A written statement of explanation from the person or persons responsible for providing erroneous information regarding initial-eligibility requirements;
- (2) Contemporaneous documentation demonstrating the misadvisement (e.g., notes, phone logs);

- (3) A written statement from the student-athlete in question demonstrating whether he or she, in good faith, relied on the erroneous information;
- (4) The institution's recruitment history of the student-athlete;
- (5) A written statement or plan from the institution regarding its actions to educate institutional staff in order to avoid misadvisement of future student-athletes. An institutional misadvisement plan may include, but is not limited to:
 - (a) Education sessions with coaches and other personnel who have a role in counseling student-athletes.
 - (b) Early placement of student-athletes on the Institutional Request List to identify potential deficiencies early.
 - (c) Work with the student-athlete's high school to obtain necessary records for initial-eligibility certification.
 - (d) No sole reliance on other entities (e.g., high school) for information.
 - (e) More careful evaluation of the student-athlete's transcript to ensure courses are on the high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses.
 - (f) Advice and encouragement on the completion of additional core courses and/or standardized exams.

b. High School Misadvisement/Lack of Advisement.

In all initial-eligibility waivers citing high school misadvisement or lack of institutional advisement as a mitigating circumstance, staff has the discretion on a case-by-case basis to request the following supporting documentation:

- (1) Written documentation from the individual at the high school who provided erroneous information;
- (2) A written statement from the individual in question demonstrating whether the student-athlete, in good faith, relied on the erroneous information.

Lack of advisement may be submitted as mitigation if the person or persons at the high school were advising a student-athlete regarding meeting high school graduation requirements, even if those conflict with initial-eligibility requirements.

9. Analysis of Mitigating Circumstances.

The following provides an overview of the mitigating circumstances used to support a request for an initial-eligibility waiver. All mitigating circumstances submitted to support an initial-eligibility waiver request are analyzed to determine whether those circumstances impacted the student-athlete's ability to satisfy initial-eligibility requirements and whether the mitigating circumstances were partially or fully within the control of the student-athlete. As noted in the overview, the threshold for receipt of full relief from initial eligibility is high for Division I student-athletes, in light of the recent increases to initial-eligibility standards.

a. Personal Hardship.

Staff may approve waivers involving a student-athlete when circumstances that contributed directly and clearly to a student-athlete's failure to satisfy initial-eligibility requirements are present. In such scenarios:

- (1) The circumstances must be out of the student-athlete's control;
- (2) The circumstances must involve the student-athlete, the student-athlete's family members, or an individual or individuals with whom the student-athlete has an existing relationship; and
- (3) Documentation must be provided to clearly demonstrate the circumstances in question had a direct impact on the student-athlete's deficiency.

b. Presentation of Nontraditional Coursework.

- A student-athlete's completion of courses that do not satisfy the legislated definition of a core course and courses invalidated through the prospective student-athlete review process, may NOT be considered as misadvisement in the analysis of a waiver case.

c. Institutional Misadvisement/Lack of Advisement.

- (1) The documentation must clearly demonstrate that but for the misadvisement or lack of advisement, the student-athlete would have satisfied all initial-eligibility requirements.
 - (2) Assertions of high school misadvisement or lack of advisement should be tied to a student-athlete's nonrecruited status at the time of the misadvisement.
- d. Nonrecruited Status.
- (1) Nonrecruited status cannot be used as the sole mitigation to support a full waiver of initial-eligibility requirements. It may support partial waiver relief.
 - (2) If an institution asserts late recruitment in support of a waiver request, the student-athlete's awareness and knowledge of initial-eligibility requirements may be factored into the staff's analysis.
- e. Lost Academic Opportunity.
- If a student-athlete loses an academic opportunity (e.g., a full academic term or terms) due to extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to, an incapacitating injury or illness, extreme financial difficulty, civil unrest or a natural disaster, staff may consider coursework replacing that lost opportunity, even if such coursework is completed outside the applicable core-course time limitation.
- f. Student-Athlete Repeating Year of High School.
- Staff may approve waivers involving a student-athlete whose grade level is reclassified and he or she subsequently completes coursework outside the core-curriculum time limitation using the following criteria:
- (1) The student-athlete's reclassification resulted in the successful completion of post-eighth semester coursework;
 - (2) The institution recruiting the student-athlete did not have an opportunity to advise the student-athlete to attempt to rectify any core-course deficiency within the student-athlete's first eight semesters of high school;

- (3) The student-athlete's only deficiency is one core-course unit of English, and he or she completed an additional unit of English subsequent to his or her eighth semester of enrollment;

[Note: The staff may consider core-course deficiencies in subject areas other than English on a case-by-case basis]

- (4) The student-athlete meets all other initial-eligibility requirements; and
- (5) Any other relevant considerations (e.g., overall academic record, high test score, etc.)

g. International Cases.

- (1) Test-Score Time Limitation.

When an international student-athlete triggers full-time enrollment at an international institution that does not require an SAT or ACT and; therefore, is not able to present a standardized test score within the applicable time limitation, the following guidelines are applicable:

- (a) No recruiting contact with any NCAA institutional staff member prior to initial full-time enrollment in a collegiate institution; and
- (b) Minimum required test score was achieved on the individual's initial taking of either the ACT or SAT.
- (c) The student-athlete's academic record (optional).

- (2) Academic Curriculum/Track.

When an international student-athlete chooses an academic track pursuant to his or her home country's program at an early age (e.g., 13 or 14) and that track does not require an academic subject that is required for NCAA initial eligibility, and he or she presents a core-course deficiency no more than two core-course units in social science/physical science and there is also either late recruitment or no recruitment history, staff will consider the following in support of the waiver request:

- (a) The strength of the student-athlete's academic record (e.g., test score, core-course grade-point average);

- (b) Whether the student-athlete attempted to rectify the deficiency?
- (c) Whether the student-athlete completed higher level coursework?

(3) Split Files.

Occurs when a student-athlete graduates from an educational system other than the one in which he or she began secondary school.

- (a) Delayed graduation issue: Student-athlete's date of graduation is based on the country in which he or she began secondary education.
- (b) Key factors to consider:
 - i. Did the student-athlete have control over the reclassification?
 - ii. When is the academic year (e.g., September through June; January through December)?
 - iii. Was the student-athlete appropriately placed in a grade level based on the objective evidence or records at hand?
 - iv. Was the reclassification based on a language barrier?
 - aa. What courses were completed after the core-course time limitation?
 - bb. Does the student-athlete rectify the core-course deficiency (with the inclusion of one additional year of coursework versus multiple years)?
 - cc. What is the strength of the student-athlete's overall academic record?
 - dd. Was the student-athlete mainstreamed by his or her high school?

i. Coursework Completed Prior to Grade Nine.

Staff may consider core courses completed prior to grade nine, even if the student-athlete's high school did not award graduation credit for the course, provided the student-athlete's transcript verifies successful completion of the course and he or she demonstrated progression in that academic subject area.

j. Other Circumstances.

There are some circumstances presented in an initial-eligibility waiver case that may not be viewed in a light most favorable to the applicant institution and student-athlete. These circumstances include but are not limited to:

- High school grading scale (e.g., seven-point scale). Standing alone, a high school's grading scale is not viewed as compelling mitigation to provide relief for a core-course grade-point average deficiency.