

## Membership

# Initial-Eligibility Waiver

## 2025-26 Best Practices

### BEFORE SUBMITTING AN IEW

» Can the student-athlete reasonably rectify the deficiency and meet initial-eligibility requirements before initial full-time collegiate enrollment?

- If yes, exhaust all options (e.g., additional core course) to rectify the deficiency.

If no, advise the SA to meet academic-redshirt (DI) requirements, if possible, and/or minimize the deficiency.

» Has the Eligibility Center released the SA's final academic certification?

- If yes, the institution may submit an IEW via RSRO.

If no, wait until the SA's final academic certification is released before submitting an IEW.

» Why is the SA deficient in meeting initial-eligibility requirements?

- Focus on mitigation that was outside of the SA's control and ties directly to the SA's deficiency.
- Mitigation should be supported by documentation (contemporaneous whenever possible).

Is the IEW submission complete, including all mitigation, specific dates and documentation (see below)?

- If no, gather all relevant information and documentation before submitting (to avoid delays).

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION (VIA RSRO)

- » SA statement addressing the mitigation, including the impact on meeting requirements.
- » Institutional letter explaining the facts/mitigation (include specific dates when possible).
- » **Education Ladder and Mitigation Timeline Form.**
- » Documentation of all asserted mitigation (contemporaneous when possible).
- » Examples: Medical or attendance records, employment or legal documents, news articles.
- » Academic support plan if the SA's core GPA for competition is below 2.300.
- » Education-impacting disability documentation (see page two), if applicable.

### HOW ARE IEWS ANALYZED?

The IEW Directive (approved by the DI Committee on Academics and DII Academic Requirements Committee) is applied. Review the **2025-26 IEW Directive** for more information regarding the academic criteria considered and the mitigation analysis.

**Note:** For Division I, nonqualifiers may practice while their IEW is pending.

### POSSIBLE IEW DECISIONS

**Approved:** Athletics aid, practice and competition in the first year of full-time collegiate enrollment.

**DI Partially Approved:** Athletics aid (first year) and practice (first term). May earn eligibility for practice in the next regular academic term during the first year by successfully completing at least nine semester hours or eight quarter hours of academic credit in the preceding regular academic term.

**Denied:** Nonqualifiers may not receive athletics aid, practice or compete in the first year. Academic redshirts and partial qualifiers may not compete in the first year of full-time collegiate enrollment.

**Note:** Email [lpadgitt@ncaa.org](mailto:lpadgitt@ncaa.org) to request a consult regarding a potential IEW (include the PSA's NCAA ID number and a brief set of facts).



## Key Considerations

<p><b>GPA Deficiency</b></p> <p>High bar for relief because a GPA deficiency generally reflects the SA's entire academic record.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What is the SA's year-to-year GPA? Is the SA's performance lower than the required GPA in some academic years and/or terms?</li> <li>» Are there documented mitigating circumstances that tie directly to that performance?</li> <li>» Focus on the underlying reason the SA has a deficiency (e.g., academic years in which the SA did not achieve the required GPA) instead of why the SA could not rectify the deficiency late in grade 12 or after high school graduation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Misadvisement/lack of advisement is not persuasive mitigation for academic performance.</p>
<p><b>Education-Impacting Disability</b></p> <p>May not be persuasive for performance in courses when accommodations were available or received. A late-diagnosed EID (e.g., during grade 12, after full-time enrollment) is generally less persuasive due to the speculative nature of determining the effect that accommodation(s) could have had on prior performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» If the SA presents a documented EID, provide all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current, signed documentation of the diagnosis (including test data) or recommendations from medical professionals treating the SA.</li> <li>○ Statement from the SA about the EID's impact on academic performance.</li> <li>○ Copies of all high school IEPs, Section 504 Plans or private school plans.</li> <li>○ If the SA has voluntarily disclosed EID documentation to the institution's Office of Disability Services, a letter on letterhead specifying approved accommodations.</li> <li>○ Academic support plan (signed by the SA and the staff member with academic oversight) describing services the institution will provide during the SA's first year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Timing and type of diagnosis, availability and use of accommodations, performance with and without services and/or accommodations, performance with and without treatment (e.g., counseling, medication, hospitalization), and subject-area and/or course-level progression may be considered.</p>
<p><b>International SAs (Including Attendance in Multiple Countries)</b></p> <p>Consult EC to confirm old and new model certifications and/or deficiencies.</p> <p>The most favorable model will be used in the IEW analysis; however, old and new model may not be combined.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Old Model (Generally Exam-Based): Did the deficiency arise due to performance on leaving exams? If so, focus on mitigation for that performance.</li> <li>» New Model (Transcript-Based): Analyze the SA's year-to-year core GPA and any failed core courses that caused deficiencies and provide mitigation for that performance.</li> <li>» Does the SA lack core courses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did the SA's country require all subjects needed to meet core-course requirements? <b>If No:</b> Review the International Academic Track language in the directive.</li> <li>○ Did the SA switch educational systems and/or repeat a term or academic year? <b>If Yes:</b> Review the Reclassification language in the directive.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Misadvisement or Lack of Advisement</b></p> <p>By itself, may not warrant approval for competition, as institutions expected to advise once recruitment begins.</p> <p>Performance in courses that do not meet legislated requirements will not be considered in the IEW process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» How was the SA advised throughout the process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High school misadvisement may not be persuasive for recruited SAs.</li> <li>○ If the SA was recruited, provide an advising timeline, including information on any preliminary evaluations completed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Did the SA take denied courses due to performance (e.g., failures) in approved core courses? If so, focus on mitigation for performance in the approved core courses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The institution may be required to submit an advisement process plan that outlines current advisement procedures and specifies corrective measures to prevent similar future situations. Once a plan is submitted, institutional misadvisement or lack of advisement assertions will not be persuasive in subsequent IEWs.</p>
<p><b>Core-Course Deficiency</b></p> <p>Focus on underlying reason why the SA lacks core courses (e.g., failures, academic tracks, repeated grade level).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Did the SA fail any core courses? If so, identify/document any mitigation for such failures.</li> <li>» Was the SA recruited? Was a preliminary evaluation conducted? How was the SA advised?</li> <li>» Did the SA repeat an academic term or year? If so, explain why.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Lack of or late recruitment, by itself, may not warrant approval for competition.</p>
<p><b>Graduation Deficiency</b></p> <p>Graduation is also generally required for admissions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Focus on why the SA lacks acceptable proof of graduation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did an international SA fail or have an insufficient number of leaving exams?</li> <li>○ Did the SA complete all requirements (e.g., senior project)?</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Did the SA's high school close or have a not-cleared status?</li> </ul>