

NCAA Division I Academic Eligibility Requirements for Two-Year College Transfers

Goals and Principles.

In its review of 2-4 transfer regulations, the NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet adopted the following goals:

Establishment of 2-4 transfer requirements that:

1. Lead to enhanced first-year academic success at the four-year institution.
2. Improve academic success and graduation of 2-4 college transfer student-athletes at four-year institutions and have these outcomes more closely mirror nontransfer student-athletes.
3. Provide greater opportunity for academically underprepared student-athletes to gain the academic skills and preparation necessary to be academically successful and graduate from a four-year institution.

Key Research Findings.

1. Two-year college transfers leave college ineligible at higher rates than any other group of student-athletes, in particular after exhausting athletics eligibility.
2. Although two-year college transfer graduation rates have trended up in the last decade, they still lag behind those student-athletes who enter an NCAA Division I institution directly from high school.
3. Transfer students from two-year colleges earn academic progress rates that are significantly lower than those for transfers from four-year colleges or nontransfers.
4. Grade-point average at the two-year institution is the strongest predictor of first-year academic success at the four-year college. Aggregate ineligibility rates among two-year college transfers decrease significantly as a function of increased two-year college grade-point average. In particular, student-athletes transferring from a two-year college with low grade-point averages are much more likely to experience academic difficulties at the four-year school than any other group of students.
5. The number of physical education activity courses taken at the two-year college has a significant and independent negative relationship with four-year college success. Controlling for other factors such as grades earned, students with fewer physical education activity credits tend to perform better academically at four-year institutions.
6. Student-athletes who transfer with more academic courses taken at the two-year institution (particularly in math, science and English) perform better at four-year institutions.

Draft Concepts.

Qualifiers: Note that per current NCAA regulations, student-athletes who are qualifiers are eligible for practice and financial aid upon transfer. Thus, the following apply only to competition during their initial year of enrollment at the Division I institution.

1. Increase the transferable grade-point-average requirement from 2.000 to 2.250.
2. Expand to all sports the current men's basketball limitation of two credit hours of physical education activity courses that may be used to fulfill the transferable degree credit and grade-point-average requirements. An exception would be provided for a physical education degree program or a degree program in education that requires physical education activity courses.
3. All other 2-4 transfer regulations for qualifiers would remain in effect. This includes the student spending at least one full-time term at the two-year college and completing an average of at least 12 semester or quarter hours of transferable degree credit per term.
4. The proposed changes (increased grade-point average and the limit on physical education activity courses) would also apply to 4-2-4 transfers.

Nonqualifiers: Nonqualifiers are ineligible for competition, practice and financial aid unless they meet two-year college transfer requirements.

1. Increase the transferrable grade-point-average requirement from 2.000 to 2.250 for competition purposes only. Although data clearly support the importance of an increased grade-point-average requirement, to continue to provide access to higher education for student-athletes who do not meet the increased grade-point average, athletics aid and practice may be provided for student-athletes who achieve the current 2.000 transferable grade-point average and meet all other requirements noted in Nos. 2 through 5 below.
2. Expand to all sports the current men's basketball limitation of two hours of physical education activity courses that may be used to fulfill the transferable degree credit and grade-point-average requirements. An exception would be provided for a physical education degree program or a degree program in education that requires physical education activity courses.
3. Require completion of transferable core credits at the two-year institution as follows: three semester/four quarters of math, three semester/four quarter hours of science and six semester/eight quarters of English. This adds three semester/four quarter credits of science to the current core requirement.

4. All other current requirements would remain in effect (e.g., earn Associate of Arts degree or equivalent academic two-year degree, 48 semester/72 quarters of transferable credits, minimum of three semesters/four quarters at two-year college, progress-toward-degree requirements, etc.).
5. An increase to the grade-point average, the limit of physical education activity courses and the inclusion of a core curriculum would also apply to 4-2-4 transfers. The core curriculum requirements may be earned at any previous two- or four-year institution.

Year of Academic Readiness for Student-Athletes at Two-Year Institution.

Central to the package is a concept that would target prospective student-athletes who are significantly academically underprepared by permitting an academic year in residence during the student's first year at the two-year college in order to remediate academic deficiencies. Members of the two-year college community have indicated that, for some student-athletes, it is extremely difficult to successfully complete the courses needed to meet NCAA transfer requirements in two years. This will only be enhanced by increased academic standards for two-year transfers. In addition, student-athletes who need significant remediation, or courses taught below those transferable to an NCAA institution, are sometimes attending two-year colleges part time for a semester or two in order not to trigger the start of their five-year NCAA "clock."

The draft concept of a year of academic readiness would provide additional time at the two-year college for student-athletes to become academically prepared for enrollment at a Division I institution. With the increased academic standards outlined above, the year of academic readiness would provide an option for two-year college students who may benefit from remedial courses and other opportunities to gain the academic skills needed to succeed and graduate from a four-year institution.

The general principles of the year of academic readiness are as follows:

1. The year of academic readiness must occur at the two-year college(s). No competition would be permitted during the year of academic readiness; however, student-athletes could practice and receive athletically related financial aid.
2. The year of academic readiness must be used during the student-athlete's initial year of collegiate enrollment, whenever that occurs.
3. Student-athletes would be required to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and be certified as a nonqualifier in order to use the year of academic readiness.
4. The NCAA Eligibility Center would track student-athletes who use the year of academic readiness. Student-athletes and two-year colleges would be required to notify the NCAA Eligibility Center, during the initial year of enrollment at the two-year institution, of the

decision to use the year of academic readiness. Use of the year of academic readiness would be noted on Institutional Request List.

5. Students-athletes who elect to use the year of academic readiness must attend the two-year college(s) full time for a minimum of five full-time semesters/seven quarters prior to transferring to a Division I institution.
6. The year of academic readiness and minimum of five semesters or seven quarters of enrollment at the two-year college may occur at multiple two-year colleges.
7. The five semester or seven quarters of enrollment at the two-year college must be consecutive. Existing exceptions would remain in place (e.g., armed services, Peace Corps, official religious mission).
8. The start of the five-year NCAA eligibility "clock" would be delayed during the first year of enrollment at the two-year institution for purposes of the five-year period of eligibility and progress toward degree.
9. Student-athletes would have a maximum of two seasons of competition remaining upon enrolling at a Division I institution. Extenuating circumstances (e.g., injury) may be considered in the waiver process.
10. The year of academic readiness would not be considered a denied participation opportunity for purposes of a five-year clock extension request.
11. Student-athletes would be provided the opportunity to receive six years of athletically related financial aid within a seven-year period.
12. First year of academic enrollment for purposes of the recruiting contact legislation does not include the year of academic readiness. Therefore, on or off campus in-person recruiting contact (including unofficial and official visits) may not occur until after the second year of enrollment. Evaluation/phone calls remain available per current bylaws.
13. Current NCAA regulations (e.g., amateurism rules) related to time between high school graduation and initial full-time enrollment at the two-year institution would remain in place.

Effective Date.

The Academic Cabinet recommends that the aforementioned changes to the two-year college transfer legislation be effective for student-athletes initially enrolling full time at a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2013. The Academic Cabinet noted this effective date provides sufficient time to conduct educational outreach and provide appropriate notice.