

**Executive Summary
NCAA Academic Reform**

The NCAA is committed to the quality education of student-athletes; it is fundamental to our mission and values.

1. The adoption of the academic reform “package” by the Division I membership has shown it is serious about reaffirming the emphasis on “student” in the student-athlete equation.
2. The NCAA and its member institutions continually strive to ensure that academic success is a primary goal of intercollegiate athletics.

The academic reform package is highlighted by:

1. Enhanced academic standards, requiring incoming student-athletes to be better prepared for college and continuing students to perform better academically in order to stay eligible and graduate.
2. Improved measurements of academic success through the creation of the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) and a Graduation Success Rate (GSR).
3. Increased accountability for the academic success of student-athletes through a penalty and recognition structure impacting individual teams.

This initiative is research driven and based on analysis of data collected on the academic behavior of student –athletes over the last two-and-a-half decades.

1. Enhanced Academic Standards.

It is clear that students will be better prepared for college if they take more college preparatory courses while in high school. To this end, the Association increased the required number of high school core courses from 14 to 16, to be fully implemented by fall 2008. Under the new NCAA regulations, student-athletes will be required to take one additional unit in mathematics and one additional unit in any core area (e.g., science).

Incoming students are required to present a test score from either the SAT or ACT for initial-eligibility purposes. A “sliding scale” is employed, as a student’s grade-point average in his or her core academic curriculum will dictate the test score they need to be eligible as a freshman.

The Association also has taken steps to make student-athletes and their colleges/universities more accountable for making steady progress toward a degree. These standards include the following:

- a. Freshmen in college are required to complete 24 hours of coursework and have at least a 1.80 grade-point average.
- b. Student-athletes entering college are required to complete 40 percent of their degree requirements by the end of their second year, 60 percent by the end of year three and 80 percent by the end of year four.

2. Improved Academic Measures.

The NCAA has developed two specific measures of academic success, in addition to the federally mandated Federal Graduate Rate.

- a. **APR. Developed as a more real-time assessment of teams' academic performance than the six-year graduation rate calculation provides, the APR awards two points each term to student-athletes who meet academic-eligibility standards and who remain with the institution. A team's APR is the total points earned by the team at a given time divided by the total points possible.**

The APR was developed to provide a more accurate, real time "snapshot" of a team's academic success and to serve as a primary measurement on which incentives and disincentives will be based. The APR is not intended to replace the federal measure or GSR; rather, it is a fairer measure that will help provide accurate, real-time data on academic progress on which the NCAA will base its reform principles.

The APR provides a much clearer picture of the current academic "culture" in each sport; and includes eligibility, retention and graduation as factors in the rate calculation.

APR data collection began with the 2003-04 academic year and the first data report was issued in February 2005 for all Division I member institutions, assessing the previous year of academic performance. The latest report was issued March 1, 2006. Division I schools are currently submitting their third year of APR data, to be released May 2007.

- b. **GSR. The GSR is an alternative graduation-rate methodology the NCAA launched last year. The new rate, which supplements rather than replaces the federal methodology, takes into consideration transfer students in a more appropriate manner. For example, if a student-athlete elects to transfer to another school and the student was in good academic standing at the time of their departure, the student will not count against the graduation success rate of the team. Further, if a transfer student enrolls at a Division I campus and ultimately graduates, the student will count as a graduate for the awarding institution.**

c. Increased Accountability.

The NCAA has developed a penalty and recognition program that rewards sports teams that do well academically and penalizes those that do not. College presidents have mandated the development of this system of accountability, which will take into account the various institutional characteristics of our member institutions.

- Penalties and recognition are tied to a team's APR.
 - (1) **Contemporaneous penalties.** These are the most immediate penalties in the academic-reform structure, and they occur when a team under an APR of 925 loses a student-athlete who would not have been academically eligible had he or she returned (an "0/2" player). A contemporaneous penalty means that teams cannot reaward that grant-in-aid to another player. In effect, a team's financial aid limit is reduced by the amount of countable aid awarded to the student-athlete who did not earn eligibility and was not retained. A contemporaneous penalty is not automatically applied when teams fall below the APR cut point; it is applied only when teams below that line do not retain an academically ineligible player.
 - (2) **Historical penalties.** While contemporaneous penalties are designed to be rehabilitative in nature, the historically based penalties carry a more significant punitive hit for teams that the APR identifies as "chronic" under-performers. The penalties will be incremental in nature, beginning with a warning once teams fall below a 900 APR cut score, and progressing to practice, and/or recruiting/financial aid restrictions, postseason bans and restricted membership status on subsequent occasions.

Historical penalties begin in 2006-07 based on three years of APR data.

- (3) **Public Recognition.** The NCAA formally recognized the top 10 percent of teams by sport based on their team's APR.

More detailed information on academic reform is available on the NCAA Web site at www.ncaa.org.