

2003 Column No. 16 - Divisions I and II - Initial-Eligibility Waiver Procedures

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Interpretation:

The following information is intended to assist Divisions I and II institutions regarding the initial-eligibility waiver process. Member institutions are encouraged to review and apply these reminders and suggestions immediately. Adherence to these policies and procedures will ensure a swifter review of each case by the staff.

Procedures

Proper Submission. Member institutions are reminded to submit a properly completed 2003-04 application form to the NCAA national office and not to the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Please note the application form and instructions are available on the NCAA Web site. To access the form, choose the "Athletics Administrator" custom home page and click "Membership publications/forms" under "Key Links." In addition, please note that a final certification report issued by the clearinghouse must be included with the application before the staff can review the case.

Acknowledging Receipt of Case. The national office will fax a memorandum within 72 hours to confirm receipt of the waiver application, to request any additional information needed to process the case (if needed) and to identify the membership services representative handling the case.

Volume of Waivers. The national office may receive as many as 50 initial-eligibility waivers each day during this time of year. Cases that may be approved or denied by the staff generally are treated as soon as possible on receipt of the proper information and never more than two weeks. Cases that need to be reviewed by the subcommittees generally will be treated within two to three weeks of receipt of all required information.

Automatic Waiver. Criteria has been approved for "automatic" waivers in cases in which a student's overall academic record clearly demonstrates that a waiver of the standards is warranted. These waivers will be granted before the student receives a "not certified" decision from the clearinghouse. Additionally, member institutions do not need to submit formal waiver requests in these cases. The following criteria were adopted as standards for these automatic waivers in Division I:

- a. The student is deficient in one unit or less in the core-course area of English only (i.e., presents at least three units of English);
- b. The student presents a grade-point average of at least 3.300 in his or her core curriculum; and
- c. The student scores in the 70th percentile on the verbal subscore of the SAT (approximately 570) or on the English subscore of the ACT (approximately 23).

Or

- a. The student is deficient in one unit or less in a core-course area other than English, but satisfies all other initial-eligibility requirements; and
- b. The student presents a core-course grade-point average and SAT or ACT score that satisfy the NCAA obvious-qualifier index. The obvious-qualifier index can be obtained by contacting the national office.

Policies

Completed Waiver Application. The initial-eligibility waiver application will not be processed until the application form is complete and all required documents are received at the national office. In order for an application to be complete, it must include the following signatures: The chief executive office or faculty athletics representative, the athletics director or the senior woman administrator and the student-athlete.

Designation of Contact Person. Member institutions are asked to note on the application form an institutional contact person for the waiver, along with the individual's title and telephone number. The staff would prefer to work only with the contact person in its review of a waiver and suggests the institution serve as the communication link with the student-athlete's family. (A large volume of telephone calls from a student-athlete's family combined with the staff working with several administrators from an NCAA institution will result in a duplication of effort and will slow the review of a particular waiver.)

Regulations and Interpretations

Practice While Initial-Eligibility Waiver Request is Pending. During its October 19, 1999, meeting, the NCAA Division I Management Council permanently revised a former Council interpretation to permit a student-athlete who has an initial-eligibility request pending before the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Waivers Committee to: practice until a decision has been reached on the waiver request by the committee (or the NCAA staff acting on behalf of the committee); and receive benefits incidental to participation (i.e., room and board) until the first day of classes or until a decision has been reached on the waiver request by the committee (or the staff acting on behalf of the committee), whichever occurs first. In issuing this interpretation, the Management Council reaffirmed the student-athlete may not practice or receive benefits incidental to participation until the institution receives notice from the NCAA staff that a completed waiver application and all required documents have been received. Further, if the waiver is denied at any level, the student-athlete must cease practice activities and cannot receive benefits incidental to participation.

Submission of Final Transcript. During its October 12, 1994, meeting, the Management Council issued an official interpretation to allow member institutions to submit a copy of a student-athlete's official high-school transcript directly to the clearinghouse for final certification purposes. Such transcripts will only be accepted from the institution's admissions or registrar's offices. Transcripts will not be accepted from the institution's department of athletics.

Core-Course Grade Changes. Any grade change related to core-course work completed in grades nine through 11 must be reflected on the final transcript received by the clearinghouse. Any grade change related to course work in grade 12, subsequent to the clearinghouse receiving the final transcript, may be reviewed solely through the submission of an initial-eligibility waiver.

Eighth-Grade Courses. Generally, only courses completed in grades nine through 12 may be used to satisfy core-curriculum requirements. However, if a student-athlete would be certified based on the inclusion of core courses completed in the eighth grade, a member institution may request the clearinghouse include such courses as core units.

Faxed Documents. Please note that the clearinghouse is prohibited from using any faxed transcripts or test scores for eligibility-certification purposes for foreign or domestic student-athletes.

Pass/Fail Courses. Please note that in the case of pass/fail courses, the clearinghouse may assign the lowest passing grade the high school would assign for a pass/fail course as opposed to the lowest passing grade for any course at that high school.