Operating Principle 2.1 - Academic Standards

The Association’s fundamental principles indicate that an intercollegiate athletics program shall be designed and maintained as a vital component of the institution’s educational system, and student-athletes shall be treated consistently with the student body. Consistent with this philosophy, the institution shall demonstrate that:

a. The institution admits all student-athletes as regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students in accordance with the regular, published entrance requirements that apply to all students;
b. The institution admits only student-athletes who have reasonable expectations of obtaining academic degrees;
   1. If the academic profile of entering student-athletes, as a whole or for any student-athlete subgroup, is lower than that of other student-athlete or comparable student-body groups or subgroups, the contrast shall be analyzed and explained by appropriate institutional authorities.
   2. If the measures of academic performance of student-athletes, as a whole or for any student-athlete subgroup, are lower than that of other student-athlete or comparable student-body groups or subgroups, this disparity shall be analyzed, explained and, if necessary, addressed (through specific plans for improvement) by appropriate institutional authorities.
c. Academic standards and policies applicable to student-athletes are consistent with those adopted by the institution for the student body in general or conference or Association standards, whichever are higher;
d. If the retention rate of any student-athlete subgroup, is lower than that of all student-athletes, this disparity shall be analyzed, explained and, if necessary, addressed through specific plans for improvement by appropriate institutional authorities;
e. Written policies related to scheduling are established in all sports to minimize student-athlete conflicts with class time and/or final examination periods due to participation in intercollegiate athletics, consistent with the provisions of NCAA Constitution 3.2.4.14; and
f. Assessment, evaluation and plans for improvement exist to ensure acclimation, retention and academic success for student-athletes with special academic needs and student-athletes who are admitted through the institution’s special-admission process or, for those institutions without a special-admission process, student-athletes in the lower quartile of the institution’s student academic profile.

Measurable Standard No. 1

If the institution developed a plan for improvement for Operating Principle 2.1 during Cycle, the institution must demonstrate that it has implemented its Cycle 2 plan or provide an explanation for partial completion of the plan.
a. The committee will not accept the following explanations for partial completion or noncompletion:
   1. The institution did not possess sufficient funds to implement the plan.
   2. The institution has had personnel changes since the original development of the plan.
   3. The institution does not have documentation of actions taken to implement the plan.

b. The committee will accept the following explanation for partial completion or noncompletion:
   1. The institution has implemented a different plan(s) or taken different action(s) to achieve or maintain progress toward the same goal outlined in its Cycle 2 plan.

**Measurable Standard No. 2**

Student-athletes must be governed by the institutional admissions policies that apply to all students.

**Measurable Standard No. 3**

Institutional admissions decisions for student-athletes must be made solely by the authority responsible for admissions decisions.

**Measurable Standard No. 4**

Academic standards and policies for student-athletes must be consistent with the standards for the student body in general, conference or NCAA standards, whichever are higher.

**Measurable Standard No. 5**

The institution must analyze and explain any differences between the academic profile of entering student-athletes, as a whole or for any student-athlete subgroup (i.e., sport, gender, ethnicity, transfers), and the academic profile of other student-athletes and comparable student-body groups or subgroups.

**Measurable Standard No. 6**

The institution must develop specific academic support programs to address the unique needs of student-athletes with entering academic profiles lower than those of the general student body.

**Measurable Standard No. 7**

The institution must assess, evaluate and if necessary, develop plans for improvement to ensure acclimation, retention and academic success for student-
athletes with special academic needs and student-athletes who are admitted through the institution’s special admissions process. If an institution does not employ a special admissions process, assessment, evaluation and if necessary, plans for improvement must be completed for student-athletes in the lowest (i.e., fourth) quartile of the institution’s general student academic profile or for an alternate group defined by a different benchmark (e.g., quintile) typically used by the institution.

**Measurable Standard No. 8**

The institution must have written step-by-step policies and procedures for the certification of initial, transfer, and continuing eligibility.

**Measurable Standard No. 9**

The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of student-athletes as a whole and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of students generally. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of student-athletes and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of students generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

**Measurable Standard No. 10**

The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of all student-athlete subgroups (i.e., team, gender, ethnicity, ethnicity within team) and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of students generally, including comparable student body groups. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of a student-athlete subgroup and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of students generally or a comparable student body subgroup, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

**Measurable Standard No. 11**

The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the corresponding Federal Graduation Rate projected by the most recent NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) of each sports team and the most recent four-class Federal Graduation Rate of students generally. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between a team’s projected Federal Graduation Rate and the most recent four-class Federal Graduation Rate of students generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.
Measurable Standard No. 12

The institution must analyze, explain and address any deficiencies between the most recent four-cohort average Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of each sports team and the most recent four-cohort average GSR of student-athletes generally. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-cohort average GSR of any team and the most recent four-cohort average GSR of student-athletes generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Measurable Standard No. 13

The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class retention rate of student-athlete subgroups (i.e., sport, gender, ethnicity) and the most recent four-class retention rate of all student-athletes. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class retention rate of any student-athlete subgroup and the four-class retention rate of student-athletes generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Measurable Standard No. 14

The institution must have established, written policies regarding the scheduling of practices and competition to minimize student-athletes’ conflicts with class time and final examination periods due to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Please note, if an institution develops a plan for improvement in this area, the plan must be implemented prior to the completion of the certification process.

Measurable Standard No. 15

The institution must analyze and explain missed class time for the last two years for each sports team and address, through a plan for improvement, any missed class time that is deemed significant or excessive in nature.

Measurable Standard No. 16

The institution’s established, written policies regarding the scheduling of practices and competition must be directly communicated in writing (e.g., provide hard copy of document, provide Web link via e-mail) to student-athletes, department of athletics staff members and other appropriate faculty and administrative staff (e.g., published in the institution’s student-athlete handbook or department of athletics policies and procedures manual, an e-mail with an attachment or link to the posting on the institution’s Web site). Please note, if an institution develops a plan for improvement in this area, the plan must be implemented prior to the completion of the certification process.