STUDENT-ATHLETES: ELIGIBILITY

A student-athlete's athletic eligibility can be affected by academic performance and progress, as well as conduct and participation in outside competitions or activities. Adherence to all University, Southeastern Conference and NCAA rules governing athletic and academic eligibility is mandatory for all Department of Athletics staff and student-athletes.

The Director of Athletics and the Faculty Athletics Representative, in conjunction with the Director for Student Services and the Head Coaches, ensure compliance with rules and regulations regarding student-athlete eligibility. The University's Office of Undergraduate Admissions determines the academic eligibility of student-athletes for certification purposes.

In general, to be considered eligible for participation in intercollegiate athletics, a student-athlete must:

- Be accepted for enrollment under the rules of the University;
- Be eligible to practice and compete according to SEC and NCAA eligibility rules and regulations; and
- Be registered for at least 12 credit hours for each regular term.

Student-athletes may compete for four (4) years, as long as the final year of competition occurs within (5) calendar years of the initial date of enrollment in a post-secondary institution. An additional year of competition may be granted to a student-athlete by the NCAA if he/she becomes ill or injured during one of the four (4) seasons of competition and meets all requirements detailed in the NCAA Manual for medical hardship. (For additional information, see Policy 506A, Student-Athletes: Medical Policy, in this Manual.)

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Student-athletes enter the University initially as a high school graduate or as a transfer student from another college. Initial eligibility requirements differ according to the type of entrance into the University, as outlined below.
**High School Graduates**

Prospective student-athletes must meet the following criteria in order to satisfy NCAA requirements for initial eligibility and be considered a "qualifier" for intercollegiate athletics participation:

1. Complete a minimum of 14 academic core courses, including at least four (4) years of English, two (2) years of mathematics (Algebra 1 or higher), two (2) years of social sciences and two (2) years of natural science (including at least one (1) lab, if offered), the two (2) remaining units of academic courses must be from courses in the above areas or from courses in, foreign language, computer science, philosophy or non-doctrinal religion (e.g., comparative literature); one (1) year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.

2. Achieve a minimum 2.5 grade point average (based on a 4.0 scale) in the core curriculum (stated above) at the time of graduation; and

3. Achieve a minimum SAT score of 820 or a minimum ACT sum composite score of 68.

**Transfer Student-Athletes**

Student-athletes must meet the admission requirements of the University for transfer students (see "Entrance Requirements" in Policy 502B, Student-Athletes: Admissions, in this Manual) as well as the eligibility requirements of the SEC and the NCAA.

Initial academic eligibility requirements for transfer student-athletes, according to NCAA regulations, vary according to whether previous enrollment was at a two-year or a four-year institution. The following are summaries of the NCAA and SEC eligibility provisions for transfers.

○ Transfers From A Two-Year Institution

To be eligible for practice, regular season competition and athletically related financial aid, a student who transfers from a junior college that conducts an intercollegiate athletics program must meet the core requirements for initial eligibility, as well as the transfer requirements of the University. Additionally, the student must:
1. Have attended the first institution for at least one (1) full time semester;

2. Have a minimum grade-point average of 2.00; and

3. Satisfactorily complete an average of 12 hours of transferable-degree credit acceptable toward any baccalaureate degree program for each full time semester attended.

All students, including those who were "partial" or "non-qualifiers" from high school, may satisfy junior college transfer provisions by graduating from the junior college, satisfactorily completing a minimum of 48 semester hours of transferable degree credit, not more than 18 semester hours may be earned during the summer and not more than nine semester hours of the transferable degree credit may be earned during the summer immediately before transfer. Students must have a minimum grade point average of 2.000 in transferable degree hours and must have attended the two-year college as a full-time student for at least three semesters. In addition, SEC rules require that a student earn at least six credit hours of transferable English with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in these credit hours and at least three credit hours of transferable math with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00 in these hours.

The NCAA Manual should be consulted for additional junior college transfer regulations as related to the following issues:

1. Students who have attended multiple junior colleges;

2. Students who competed in a sport at the junior college of residence;

3. Credits earned as a part-time student at a four-year institution;

4. Minimum load requirements; and

5. Academic versus vocational degrees.

6. Transfers From A Four-Year Institution

The NCAA requires that a transfer from one four-year institution to another four-year institution establish residency (usually one year) at the new institution before he/she can compete. In most cases, however, if the student obtains a release from the previous institution, he/she can engage in practice and receive financial aid. In sports other than football and basketball, a student can compete immediately without establishing residency provided the following conditions are met:
1. The student has never transferred before from one four-year to another four-year institution;

2. The student's athletically related financial aid at the first institution was not renewed;

3. The first institution certifies that the student met satisfactory progress requirements and the student would have been eligible had he/she returned; and

4. The first institution has no objection to the transfer and waiver of the residency requirement.

Additional exceptions to the residency requirement for transfers from a four-year institution are described in detail in the NCAA Manual.

CONTINUING ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to maintain academic eligibility for athletic participation after the initial year, NCAA regulations require student-athletes to make "satisfactory progress" toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree. More specifically, a student-athlete must:

Effective August 1, 2003, for those first entering any collegiate institution full time on or after August 1, 2003:

24 hours - A student-athlete must complete a minimum of 24 semester hours of academic credit prior to the beginning of the second year of enrollment.
18 hours – A student-athlete must complete a minimum of 18 semester hours of academic credit during each regular academic year.
Six-hour – A student-athlete must complete a minimum of six-semester hours of academic credit in the previous full time regular academic term.

40/60/80 – A student-athlete must meet the following progress toward degree requirements:
- Start of third year: 40 percent of degree completed
- Start of fourth year: 60 percent of degree completed
- Start of fifth year: 80 percent of degree completed

90/95/100 - A student athlete must achieve the following minimum GPA:
- Start of second year: 90 percent of GPA required for graduation
- Start of third year: 95 percent of GPA required for graduation
- Start of fourth year: 100 percent of GPA required for graduation
University Academic Requirements

The University requires all undergraduate students to maintain a grade point average which ensures that they are making progress toward the 2.0 grade point average minimum requirement for graduation. After a student-athlete has declared a major program of study or intended major, only grades acceptable for degree credit in that major may be applied toward calculation of satisfactory progress. Degree applicability is determined by the school or college offering the major program of study.

- Probation

Student-athletes whose GPA falls below the levels required by their school or college may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation might not affect the athletic eligibility of a student-athlete in the first three years unless he/she fails to meet academic standards for students on probation. A coach may impose practice sanctions or additional requirements to ensure improvement in the student-athlete's academic standing at the University.

- Suspension or Dismissal

When a student-athlete is declared academically ineligible in accordance with provisions of NCAA Bylaw 14.12 and the institution has a documented appeal process for all such students, the student-athlete would be eligible or ineligible during the appeal process based on the institutional regulations applicable to all such students, it being understood that if the institution's appeal process extends into the following term, an eligibility declaration for purposes of NCAA legislation must be made prior to the beginning of that term.

Exceptions to the Satisfactory Progress Rule

The NCAA permits exceptions to the satisfactory progress rule under certain circumstances. These are explained in detail in the NCAA Manual and include the following:

- Missed Term

A student-athlete may miss up to an academic year of enrollment for one time only if he/she fulfilled satisfactory progress requirements while enrolled and did not participate in outside competition when not in attendance at the University.

- Medical Absence

A Medical Absence Waiver may be granted when a student-athlete sustains an illness or injury that precludes full-time enrollment, but does not result in withdrawal from all classes. Credits earned during this period may not be used in determining satisfactory progress.
○ International Competition

Academic and enrollment waivers may be granted to student-athletes participating in Pan American, Olympic or World University Games.

Change of Major

As stated above, a major or designated major must be selected no later than the beginning of the fifth term of college enrollment. (The beginning of the term is defined as no later than the last day of the schedule adjustment period.) Thereafter, a change of major during any term is permissible, but credits used to meet satisfactory progress requirements prior to the change must be acceptable for the degree previously sought.

CONDUCT AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Student-athletes are expected to uphold ethical standards of conduct and demonstrate ethical behavior especially in matters related to gambling and bribery and unsportsmanlike conduct, as discussed in Policy 501, Student Athletes: Conduct and Ethics, in this Manual. In addition, a student-athlete's eligibility is jeopardized if he/she:

- Arranges for fraudulent credit or false transcripts;
- Violates relevant SEC or NCAA rules and regulations; or
- Furnishes the NCAA or other regulatory bodies with false or misleading information about other individuals.

Maintaining Amateur Status

NCAA regulations regarding amateurism and permissible awards, benefits and expenses should be carefully reviewed in order to avoid violations. In general, student-athletes cannot:

- Agree to have their pictures or names used to promote a commercial product;
- Accept benefits such as gifts, meals, and loans of cars or money, as offered by athletic interest groups (e.g., alumni or booster organizations) or anyone within the athletics program of the University;
- Be represented by an agent or organization in order to market their athletic skills or reputation;
- Receive any benefit that is not available to other students at the University; or
- Participate in a summer sports league not approved by the NCAA.
• Accept payment, or a promise of payment (e.g., in cash prizes, gifts or travel) for intercollegiate athletics participation;

• Enter into an agreement of any kind to compete in professional athletics or negotiate a professional contract;

• Request to be put on a professional sport's draft list or try out with a professional sports organization;

• Play on any professional athletics team;

• Have athletically related financial aid determined by anyone other than the University; or

• Participate on teams other than those of Louisiana State University during the season. (This includes exhibition or tournament games.)

**Outside Sports Competition**

Per SEC regulations, a student-athlete who participates in a sport outside of the institution or as a member of an organized team or group, becomes ineligible in that sport during the remainder of that academic year; except that, in volleyball the student is ineligible for the following year when the outside competition occurs after the close of the season, and in basketball the student is ineligible permanently. (Information related to the appeals process for restoring eligibility may be obtained from the SEC Office.)

However, NCAA rules do permit a student-athlete to compete in one (1) game a year in his/her sport involving players from his/her former high school and its alumni team, provided such competition takes place during an official vacation period of the regular academic year. In addition, students may participate as individuals in events such as golf and tennis tournaments and swimming and track meets, provided such participation is approved by the Director of Athletics and Head Coach of that sport and does not violate NCAA regulations.

Organized competition exists (as specified by NCAA Bylaws) where any of the following conditions are present:

• Teams are regularly formed or have team rosters:

• The competition is scheduled and publicized in advance;

• Official score is kept;
• Individual or team standings are maintained;

• An official timer or game officials are used;

• Squad members are dressed in team uniforms;

• Admission is charged;

• The competition is privately or commercially sponsored; or

• The competition is either directly or indirectly sponsored, promoted or administered by an individual, an organization or any other agency.

Several exceptions exist to the outside competition rulings; therefore, student-athletes should be directed to consult their Head Coach, the Assistant Athletic Director for Student Services or the Director of Athletics prior to participating in such activities.

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The Director for Student Services coordinates the eligibility certification process for all student-athletes with the University's Associate Director of Admissions. Student-athletes are certified as eligible to participate in practice and outside competition or as only eligible to participate in practice.

The NCAA Squad List form (see Appendix 502C-9) is used to certify the eligibility of each student-athlete prior to the student's first contest each academic year. The form is completed by the Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and then signed by the Faculty Athletics Representative, Financial Aid Director and the Director for Student Services prior to being transmitted to the Conference Office with all pertinent documentation.

The SEC Commissioner is advised of the continuing eligibility of each student-athlete who is to participate in sports during additional terms of the academic year after the initial annual certification. A list of those with continuing eligibility is verified by the Associate Director of Admissions for this purpose.

Copies of all certification forms are retained for file by the Director and Student Services.

NCAA Squad List

Student-athletes may not participate in competition until they have been listed as eligible via the NCAA Squad List which is kept on file by the Director and Student Services. They are eligible for practice unless they are partial or non-qualifiers.
Squad Lists are prepared using information from team rosters, which are submitted to the Director and Student Services at the beginning of each practice season. Roster changes are reported to the Director for Student Services by the Head Coach throughout the season, as changes occur.

**NCAA Academic Reporting Form**

Each student-athlete's academic eligibility is documented by the NCAA on an annual basis using the Academic Reporting Form (see Appendix 502C-2). The form is compiled by the Academic Center for Athletes staff, signed by the Chancellor and submitted by October 1 of each year.

**Petitions to Restore Eligibility**

If a student-athlete becomes academically ineligible, the Associate Director of Admissions, in conjunction with the Head Coach, the Director for Student Services and the Director of Athletics determines whether a petition to restore eligibility is warranted. When the decision is made to petition on behalf of a student-athlete, SEC and NCAA rules and regulations are followed. Under no circumstances can the restoration of eligibility be made retroactive.

The Faculty Athletics Representative ensures compliance with all Conference and NCAA rules and regulations regarding eligibility, including the preparation of any related paperwork for submission to the SEC and the NCAA.

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