

## **NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate Adjustment Directive**

### **Background**

The NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) is a metric that awards points for academic eligibility/graduation (E) and retention (R). Eligibility is important as it measures a student's progress toward a degree at regular intervals. Retention is a crucial part of the APR because of the following:

1. The pilot data reflected that retention is an even stronger component of graduation than eligibility.
2. By awarding points for retention, potential issues related to "run-offs" and "recruiting mistakes" could be monitored and addressed.
3. Term-by-term retention points allow for a student-athlete to receive "credit" for every term he or she returns, even if he or she eventually transfers or is not retained for any reason. This "partial-credit" model has been seen as a significant improvement over the federal graduation rate and is a very important consideration when assessing E + R for the APR calculation.

The NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance has approved this directive to provide guidance to the NCAA staff and the NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance Subcommittee on Data Collection and Reporting in reviewing APR adjustment requests. The committee recognizes that there may be some legitimate reasons why student-athletes are not retained and do not maintain academic eligibility, and in these instances, a student-athlete's lost points should be adjusted.

### **Guiding Principles**

Adjustments to a team's APR will be considered based on circumstances surrounding individual student-athletes. Adjustments generally will be reviewed in the context of whether the mitigating circumstances surrounding the individual student-athlete are beyond the control of the student-athlete and/or the team/institution.

### **Circumstances Warranting an Adjustment of the Eligibility or Retention Point**

In general, a student-athlete who leaves an institution at the end of a term and has not graduated will be a "1 for 2" or a "0 for 2" depending on whether he or she earns the eligibility point. Adjustments will be granted only if stated conditions described below are met.

1. A student-athlete who did not complete a regular academic term due to circumstances outside of his or her control (e.g., student-athlete suffers from a serious medical condition early in the academic term), failed to earn an eligibility point and was not retained [based on one of the accepted reasons for departure listed below in items 3-(a) through 3-(k)], will be considered a "0 for 0."
2. A student-athlete who completed a regular academic term as a full-time student-athlete may receive an adjustment to a lost eligibility point. If the eligibility point is adjusted because of one of the reasons listed below, the eligibility point will not be granted or denied, but will be removed from both the numerator and the denominator.
  - a. The student-athlete is rendered academically ineligible and the institution is not able to submit a progress-toward-degree waiver (e.g., transfer, withdrawal).
  - b. Situations clearly supported by contemporaneous-medical documentation, which states that a student-athlete is unable to remain at or return to the institution as a result of incapacitating physical or mental circumstances.
  - c. Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, floods).
  - d. Other unforeseen events and/or circumstances beyond the student-athlete's and/or institution's control.
3. Student-athletes who completed a regular academic term as a full-time student-athlete must earn the academic eligibility point for the last regular academic term in which he or she was enrolled in order to have the retention point adjusted. If the student-athlete earned the eligibility point, but was not retained as a full-time student-athlete the following term because of one of the reasons listed below, the student-athlete will be considered a "1 for 1." The retention point is not granted or denied; rather, it simply is removed from both the numerator and the denominator.
  - a. The student-athlete's degree program was discontinued. This circumstance must be supported by documentation from the institution's registrar's office indicating that the student-athlete was enrolled in the specific degree program and the date the degree program was discontinued.
  - b. The student-athlete's degree program was not offered at the original institution. This circumstance must be supported by documentation from official institutional sources indicating that the student-athlete's degree program was not offered at the original institution and the student-athlete is enrolled in the degree program at the subsequent institution.

- c. The student-athlete's sport was discontinued. This circumstance must be supported by documentation from the institution's director of athletics indicating when the sport program was discontinued and when the announcement of the discontinuation was made.
- d. Situations clearly supported by contemporaneous-medical documentation, which states that a student-athlete is unable to remain at or return to the institution as a result of incapacitating physical or mental circumstances.
- e. The student-athlete is unable to attend an intercollegiate institution full time as a result of a life-threatening or incapacitating injury or illness suffered by a member of the student-athlete's immediate family, which is clearly supported by contemporaneous-medical documentation.
- f. Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, floods).
- g. Extreme financial difficulties as a result of a specific event (e.g., layoff, death in the family) experienced by the student-athlete or by an individual of whom the student-athlete is legally dependent. These circumstances must be clearly supported by objective documentation (e.g., decree of bankruptcy, proof of termination) and must be beyond the control of the student-athlete or the individual of whom the student-athlete is legally dependent.
- h. Harassment. This circumstance must be clearly supported by objective documentation (e.g., police report).
- i. Participation in the following Olympic or international competition:
  - (1) Official Pan American, World Championships, World Cup, World University and Olympic training, tryouts and competition;
  - (2) Officially recognized training and competition, qualifying for final Olympic tryouts; or
  - (3) Official tryouts and competition involving national teams sponsored by the appropriate national governing bodies of the U.S. Olympic Committee or, for student-athletes representing another nation, the equivalent organization of that nation.
- j. Participation in professional sports as a vocation. Such participation may be demonstrated by the following:
  - (1) Signed contract with a professional sports team or organization;

- (2) Established pattern of acceptance of prize money for competition;
- (3) Documented declaration of intent to compete as a professional in an individual sport (e.g., tennis, golf); or
- (4) Other evidence determined by the staff/committee to confirm the individual's professional sports vocation.

The following actions, alone, do not sufficiently demonstrate participation in professional sports as a vocation:

- (1) Signing a contract with an agent;
  - (2) Signing a commercial endorsement agreement;
  - (3) Declaring for a professional sports draft; or
  - (4) Participating in professional sports tryouts.
- k. Other unforeseen events and/or circumstances beyond the student-athlete's and/or institution's control.

### **Circumstances that Do Not Warrant an Adjustment of the Retention Point**

Circumstances that are considered to be within the control of the student-athlete and/or the institution include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Student-athlete transferred to another institution for any reason not included in the section above.
2. Student-athlete departed the institution due to lack of playing time, or desire to play for a different coach.
3. Student-athlete departed the institution due to a coaching change.
4. Student-athlete departed the institution because he or she was placed on academic suspension.
5. Student-athlete departed an institution because of disciplinary problem(s) (e.g., crime, academic fraud, dismissed from team, positive drug test).

6. Student-athlete departed an institution because his or her team is subject to disciplinary measure (e.g., infractions sanctions, NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program penalties).
7. Student-athlete departed an institution because his or her athletically related aid was not renewed or was reduced.

### **Reconsideration**

An institution is permitted to request the staff reconsider APR adjustment requests that were previously denied if the APR adjustment directive is changed and the change would have affected the outcome of the original adjustment request. An institution may not request retroactive relief from contemporaneous penalties or retroactive incentives based on the award of an adjustment to data made to subsequent academic year(s). Requests for reconsideration will not be heard by the subcommittee until the staff has reviewed and considered the request. Please note that participation of student-athlete in professional sports as a vocation is not mitigation for reconsideration of APR adjustment requests when the student-athlete failed to earn the eligibility point.