



**NCAA Officiating Reform Initiative
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Division I Conferences
Updated August 8, 2025**



General Reform Initiative Questions

1. Why was this reform initiative implemented? How does it help conference offices and the officiating profession?

The NCAA is committed to a long-term officiating reform strategy focusing on providing resources and tools to assist Divisions I, II and III conferences in addressing several officiating concerns. This initiative will assist NCAA officiating leadership by enhancing the centralized registration process, creating consistency in how officials are assigned, educated, paid, and provide the ability to harvest data to identify where resources should be deployed. The NCAA wants to play a critical role in ensuring timely payments to officials, easing the administrative burden on conferences and institutions, eliminate camp attendance mandates tied to regular season assignments and prohibit dues on the backs of officials connected with covering officiating platform costs. The NCAA has ensured officials will have access to education, opportunities, and protections.

2. Are Division I conferences mandated to participate in the officiating reform initiative?

No. Division I conferences will continue to have the autonomy to utilize any officiating platform and are not required to participate. If a conference declines to participate, no invoice credit will be issued to the conference or its member institutions.

3. What are the Officiating Reform Initiative Requirements for years 2-8 (2025-26 – 2031-32)?

- Use RQ Pay for all payments to officials in sports that use RQ Assign.
- Meet the percentage threshold of each sport's officials must be registered in their NCAA Central Hub (85% in 2025-26 and 90% 2026 – 2032).
- Pay officials at least once per month (using RQ Pay) (*Recommendation: officials paid directly by the conference office, but can be paid by institutions or coordinator*).
- Eliminate charging dues/fees to officials to cover officiating platform costs.
- Eliminate mandate that officials pay to attend camps to receive assignments.

4. What are the NCAA Central Hub Sports?

Baseball, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Bowling, Field Hockey, Football, Men's Ice Hockey, Women's Ice Hockey, Men's Lacrosse, Women's Lacrosse, Men's Soccer, Women's Soccer, Softball, Women's Volleyball, Men's Water Polo, Women's Water Polo, and Men's Wrestling.

5. Why is NCAA Central Hub registration required and how does that benefit officials who are required to pay the Central Hub registration fee?

The NCAA is committed to the betterment of the officiating landscape and views NCAA Central Hub registration as a critical step in the process. Participation in the NCAA Central hub assists in the recruitment, retention, and refinement of officials by providing access to the included educational resources, opportunities to work regular season and postseason assignments, as well as protection mechanisms like the included general liability, professional liability, and accident medical insurance. NCAA Central Hub registration allows the NCAA and other

stakeholders to have access to relevant officiating data. This information will assist in assessing officiating needs based on a multitude of metrics and efficiently deploy the necessary resources.

6. What if our conference meets all but one of the reform initiative requirements outlined in a given sport?

In years 2-8 (2025-26 – 20231-32), Division I conferences must meet ALL reform initiative requirements to be eligible for a credit in that sport. The conference would be eligible to receive credit for other Central Hub sports on RQ+ that meet all requirements.

7. What if one or more of our conference's schools are NOT paying via RQ Pay for regular-season and championships competition?

In years 2-8 (2025-26 – 20231-32), the conference office, or all institutions in the conference, must use RQ Pay for all regular-season and championship payments to officials in the Central Hub sports using RQ Assign. If one or more institutions are not meeting this requirement, the conference will not be eligible for the invoice credit in this sport, even if all other initiative requirements are met for that sport.

8. Are non-championship season contests (e.g., football spring game, fall competition for baseball and softball) included in the requirement for using RQ Assign and RQ Pay?

Yes, RQ Assign and RQ Pay must be used for the officiating assignments and game officials payments for Central Hub sports during the non-championship season in order to be eligible for an invoice credit in the sport. Regardless of the type of competition, this initiative will assist in timely payment to officials.

Costs and Invoice Credit

9. Will participating in this initiative result in an additional financial responsibility for our conference?

For conferences currently using RQ Assign and RQ Pay for all their Central Hub sports, there will be no additional costs. For conferences currently using RQ Assign but not using RQ Pay, the conference (or its member institutions) will begin incurring RQ Pay transaction fees if they begin using the RQ Pay service. If conferences are moving sports to RQ+ from another platform and will use RQ Assign and RQ Pay moving forward, the conference will be assessed the platform and transaction fees associated with the use of RQ Assign and RQ Pay, respectively, but will also receive the invoice credit.

10. If our conference does not meet all reform initiative requirements outlined in one or multiple sports, what will the cost be for our conference?

Conferences will continue to be invoiced for their usage of RQ products (RQ Assign, RQ Pay, RQ Resource, etc.). No additional charges will be assessed to the conference for not meeting reform initiative requirements. However, the conference will not be eligible for a credit in any Central Hub sport on RQ+ that does not meet the initiative requirements.

11. Our conference does not currently incur costs from RQ+ as all costs are paid by our member institutions and/or coordinators of officials and not the conference office. Can RQ+ send us a check for our credit?

No, RQ+ will not issue a check to a conference office in lieu of an invoice credit. However, the invoice credit can be applied to a conference's member institutions' and/or coordinators of officials' invoice if payments to RQ+ for officiating services are made by the member institutions and not the conference office.

12. What will our RQ invoice consist of if participating in this initiative?

The RQ invoice will include all services used by the conference (e.g., RQ Assign, RQ Pay transaction fees, RQ Resource, RQ Insight). The invoice will also list the proportionate invoice credit for which the conference is eligible.

13. When can our conference expect to receive our invoice credit?

Following each season (fall, winter, spring), the invoice credit will be applied to the conference's RQ+ invoice for the sports that have met the initiative requirements during the season. As a reminder, there are no requirements in year 1 and all Central Hub sports using RQ Assign are eligible for the invoice credit.

14. Are transaction fees eliminated as a part of this initiative?

For Division I, transaction fees are not eliminated. Conferences will incur the transaction fees for all payments to officials via RQ Pay. The invoice credit is intended to offset the conference's RQ+ costs, which include RQ Pay transaction fees.

Officiating Compliance Program (OCP)

15. What is the Officiating Compliance Program (OCP)?

The Officiating Compliance Program (OCP) was designed to ease the administrative burden on conference offices. It is a conference-specific report prepared by RQ+ summarizing officials' NCAA Central Hub registration status, background check consent status, and background check outcome (flag vs. no flag). The report is sent to the Commissioner, or sport-specific designees, on a weekly basis leading into, and during the early part of, the season. The conference office, not RQ+ representatives, will review the background check on Sterling Volunteers for any official with a "flag" and determine any action. The program also includes notification emails from RQ+ (on behalf of the conference) to officials regarding the requirements and their status.

16. Will our conference get the OCP at no cost for our Central Hub sports on RQ+?

In all years of the initiative, the Officiating Compliance Program (OCP) will be included, at no cost, for any conference/sport using RQ Assign.

17. What does our conference need to do, if anything, to confirm participation in the OCP?

Each conference commissioner has received a "Declaration Form" document via DocuSign from Emily Parkins, staff member at RQ+. This form will declare a conference's participation in the OCP for the 2025-26 academic year.

18. Is the OCP available for our Central Hub sports that are not using RQ Assign?

No, the OCP is not available for sports not assigned using the RQ+ platform, as RQ+ won't have access to the appropriate information to complete the report.

19. Is the OCP available for non-Central Hub sports that are assigned through RQ+ (e.g., swimming and diving, golf, tennis)?

No, the OCP is not available for non-Central Hub sports as there is no registration process for these sports.

20. How do I access NCAA Central Hub registration and background check information if my conference is not participating in the Officiating Reform Initiative, or the OCP?

Coordinators and conference office staff members have access to eligibility information via the RQ+ system, which illustrates whether an official has registered and whether they have consented to the background check, among other things. Below are the steps on how to access eligibility information. It is important to note that the officials that populate on this screen are those that have self-selected the conference during the registration process. Officials who have not registered or did not self-select your conference will not appear. The benefit of the OCP is that the report pulls directly from your roster of officials in the system, so it's only showing the officials that actually work for the conference, and it shows their registration status, background check consent status, whether or not they've selected the conference, and background check outcome (flag vs. no flag).

- Sign into RefQuest (RQ+); Click your Avatar; Click Eligibility; Under Select Consortium, select Sport; Click Monitor Eligibility; Under Filter by Role, select Official to see all officials who selected your conference during registration; or Click Filter by Conference to select your conference (only applicable for coordinators that have more than one conference); Click the green checkmark or red X next to each official's name to view completed and incomplete eligibility requirements.

The results of the background check can only be viewed by going to the Sterling Volunteers webpage. The background checks of officials who have shared this information with the conference will appear within the conference's Sterling Volunteers portal.

21. Can the OCP report be sent directly to the coordinator of officials?

RQ+ will send OCP reports to the coordinator of officials only with explicit, written permission from the Conference Commissioner.

Miscellaneous Questions

22. If our conference has questions, who is the best person to contact?

Please contact Ben Brownlee (bbrownlee@ncaa.org) at the NCAA with any initiative related questions or Emily Parkins (emily@refquest.com) at RQ+ with any questions specific to the RQ+ platform.

23. What does our conference need to do to initiate the process of moving additional sports to RQ+?

Please contact Emily Parkins (emily@refquest.com) or email support@refquest.com.

24. Will training be provided to conference staff, coordinators of officials and institutions as a part of a transition to RQ+?

Yes. Training sessions will be provided to conference staff, coordinators, and institutions by RQ+ staff members upon request.

25. Will there be additional opportunities to learn more about the Officiating Reform Initiative?

Yes. The NCAA will continue to host webinars in cooperation with RQ+, the NCAA's officiating services provider. Conference leadership are encouraged to attend all webinars. For more information, reach out to Ben Brownlee at the NCAA (bbrownlee@ncaa.org).

26. What if our conference has signed a contract with another officiating services provider and it does not expire for a few years?

Participation in this initiative is optional and at the discretion of each Division I conference. Initiative requirements will not be waived due to a conference's contractual commitment with another provider.

27. What if one of our conference coordinators refuses to switch to RQ+?

Initiative requirements will not be waived and no invoice credit will be applied for that respective sport if a coordinator chooses to stay on a different officiating services platform against the direction of the conference office. Conference office leadership will convey to RQ+ which sports will use the RQ+ platform.

28. What if officials self-declare they work in a conference when they do not? How does this work toward the percentage threshold requirement?

The percentage of officials registered is calculated solely from the conference's actual roster of officials in RQ Assign, as inputted by the coordinator or the conference.

29. Are there any officiating organizations that include NCAA central hub registration?

Yes. RQ+ has agreements with the following organizations that include NCAA central hub access. In these sports, officials who register with the following organizations will automatically be added to the NCAA Central Hub:

- Professional Association of Volleyball Officials (PAVO).
- National Intercollegiate Soccer Official Association (NISOA).
- Collegiate Women's Lacrosse Officiating Association (CWLOA).

30. If some of our officials are NAIA officials and register with the NAIA Central Hub, do they also need to register for the NCAA Central Hub?

Yes, officials are required to register with the NCAA Central Hub for their respective sport. NAIA central hubs have no bearing and play no role for the NCAA Officiating Reform Initiative.

31. Is the Central Hub registration fee going away as a part of this initiative?

No, the Central Hub registration fees remain in place. NCAA Central Hub registration fees can be found by visiting [PR SummaryNCAACentral Hubs.pdf](#).

32. Are observers required to register for the NCAA Central Hub?

No, observers are not required to register for the NCAA Central Hub as a part of this initiative. However, there is an option for observers to register so they have access to the education posted by NCAA sport leadership.

33. Does this initiative prohibit our conference coordinators from running camps?

No. The spirit and intent is to prevent coordinators from requiring officials pay to attend their camp in order to receive assignments from a coordinator.

34. Can our coordinator require officials to attend their camp(s)?

As a part of the Officiating Reform Initiative...

- Coordinators cannot require officials to pay to attend their camp(s) in order to receive assignments.
- Coordinators may require camp attendance at no cost to receive assignments.
- Coordinators may charge a registration fee to attend their camp(s) as long as camp attendance is not mandated.

35. Providing training via camps is integral for continuous improvement of the officiating staff. The camps are expensive to conduct. How will coordinators cover the costs associated with running these camps?

Coordinators are permitted to hold camps for their officials and charge a fee to attend the camp. However, coordinators cannot require that the officials pay and attend the camp in order to receive assignments.

36. Does this initiative prohibit our conference or coordinators from charging dues/fees?

No. The spirit and intent is to prevent coordinators from charging dues or fees to "cover officiating platform or related costs". Approval by the Commissioner will assist in ensuring dues are being used to cover legitimate officiating expenses incurred by the conference and/or coordinator of officials.

37. Does this initiative prohibit our conference or coordinators from deducting a few dollars from an official's game fee to cover administrative costs and supplement the annual stipend for the coordinator of officials?

Deduction of game fees and other forms of game payment must be done with the Commissioner's knowledge and approval.

38. In some sports, there are officiating organizations charging their officials an annual fee to be a part of an association in order to be on their officiating roster/receive assignments. Is this permissible for coordinators who work for conferences that are participating in this initiative?

Similar to camps, the spirit and intent is to prevent the charging of dues or fees in order to receive assignments. Any fees charged by coordinators and/or on behalf of an officiating organization must be done with the Commissioner's knowledge and approval.

39. Does this initiative cover single-sport conferences that sponsor non-Central Hub Sports (e.g., men's volleyball, beach volleyball, women's golf)?

No, this initiative is for NCAA Central Hub sports only (Baseball, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Bowling, Field Hockey, Football, Men's Ice Hockey, Women's Ice Hockey, Men's Lacrosse, Women's Lacrosse, Men's Soccer, Women's Soccer, Softball, Women's Volleyball, Men's Water Polo, Women's Water Polo, and Men's Wrestling). As sport offerings expand, additional sports may become NCAA Central Hub sports (e.g. women's wrestling, flag football, etc.). Any sports that are added as NCAA Central Hub sports will be subject to the Officiating Reform Initiative requirements and benefits.