



## NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate Improvement Plan 2019-20 Requirements

### **Purpose of the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate Improvement Plan.**

The NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate Improvement Plan allows an institution to demonstrate its commitment to improving a team's measurable outcomes when that team is not meeting the established NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate benchmark (a 930 multiyear rate). The plan serves as a framework for an institution to improve teams' APRs and overall academic performance by monitoring eligibility, retention and graduation performance; identifying critical issues impacting these areas; and developing goals to address the team's critical issues.

Institutions that have at least one team with a multiyear APR below 930 are required to develop and submit an APR Improvement Plan. Institutions are also required to implement these plans and report on that. The first section of this document outlines how an APR Improvement Plan will be reviewed to determine if an institution implemented its plan submitted for the previous academic year. APR Improvement Plan implementation is used in the analysis of NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program waiver requests and access to filters for limited-resource institutions. The second section of this document outlines the minimum requirements for new or revised APR Improvement Plans.

### **Key Terminology.**

- 1. Data analysis** is the review of APP and other data (e.g., NCAA Division I Institutional Performance Program data on incoming student-athlete profiles, the progress of "at-risk" student-athletes, the progress of student-athletes admitted below the institution's regular admission standards) with the focus on determining what points are being lost, who is losing them and how. The institution is encouraged to look for common themes in the point loss over the four years that make up the multiyear APR cohort in order to identify critical issues impacting the team's success. For example, an institution may conclude that a large number of APR points are lost by 2-4 transfers. It should break that down to determine what kind of points this group is losing (eligibility or retention) and what common factors are in play with student-athletes in this group that lose points.
- 2. Critical issues** are those issues, identified by the institution through data analysis and investigation, that impact the underperforming team's eligibility, retention or graduation performance. Narrowed down, these identified points become the team's critical issues. In the example of points being lost by 2-4 transfers, deeper investigation may lead an institution to determine that the 2-4 transfers are unprepared for four-year college work in the area of math or English. Or the institution may conclude that 2-4 transfers with a grade-point average below a 2.500 struggle at the four-year institution.

3. **Goals** are targets that tie to the critical issue. They should be specific and measurable in order for the institution to be able to demonstrate if it is effective. In the example above, the goal may be to reduce the number of eligibility points lost by two-year transfer student-athletes by 50 percent.
4. **Steps** are the specific actions or processes designed to bring the goals to life. They usually include the individuals responsible for components of the process and timelines as well. In the example above, the steps in the goal might include coordinating with the admissions office to design an "at-risk" evaluation.

### **Submission Requirements.**

Each institution with a team with a multiyear APR below 930 must develop and submit an APR Improvement Plan to the national office, even if the team is not subject to APP penalties or the loss of postseason competition. [Note: All institutions with multiyear rates including at least two years of APR data are subject to the plan development and submission requirements.] Teams that have a squad-size adjusted APR above 930 are not subject to this requirement.

Institutions that received a conditionally approved waiver of an APP penalty that must demonstrate acceptable implementation of its APR Improvement Plan as a condition of its waiver, must submit information regarding implementation of its plan to the national office by the prescribed deadline.

### **Limited-Resource Institutions Requesting Access to APP Filters.**

Limited-resource institutions can use filters within the APP structure that allow a team with an APR below 930 to avoid both penalties and loss of access to postseason competition, provided the institution has submitted an APR Improvement Plan that meets established criteria. Limited-resource institutions will be defined as teams in the bottom 15 percent of all Division I member institutions in resources (using a formula developed by the NCAA research staff), excluding all Football Bowl Subdivision institutions.

In order to access the APP filters for limited-resource institutions, those institutions must provide APR Improvement Plans that meet the following:

1. A history of implementation of APR Improvement Plans - significant and critical elements - if a plan was previously required. Implementation reports must include a signed statement from the chancellor or president on the effectiveness of the goals that were implemented. The implementation report must include demonstration that all essential goals tied to a team's critical issues were implemented. The implementation report must also include a report on the progress made implementing any long-term goals;
2. A current APR Improvement Plan that identifies critical issues supported by data analysis;

3. A current APR Improvement Plan with meaningful goals to address critical issues. Goals in the current APR Improvement Plan must be performance based (e.g., decrease the number of lost eligibility points) and outcome specific (e.g., create an academic profile for successful two-year transfer student-athletes). Steps designed to achieve the goals should specify how the goal will be achieved and should include specific individuals and their roles in the process. Goals can be short- or long-term, but long-term goals must include short-term benchmarks to track progress;
4. Broad-based participation in the development, assessment and oversight of the plan. The APR Improvement Plan development team must include the institution's highest academic authority (e.g., provost). As appropriate, the plan team should include representatives from any function area or department of the institution that is required to complete a step (e.g., admissions, academic support, athletic administration, coaches, faculty groups, technology staff, purchasing, finance);
5. Approval by chancellor or president. When developing a new APR Improvement Plan, the institution must make the chancellor or president and the improvement plan team, including the institution's highest academic authority, available for a videoconference in which they outline the improvement plan in order to demonstrate involvement in its development and future implementation;
6. Projected single-year APR targets that elevate the team out of the penalty structure within four years; and
7. The APR Improvement Plan must include a reporting timeline created by the institution. The NCAA staff must check in with the institution regarding progress on implementation before the implementation report due date. The timeline can be adjusted if needed, but all adjustments must be communicated with and approved by the NCAA staff.

Failure to Develop a Required APR Improvement Plan.

An institution that is required to create and submit an APR Improvement Plan, but fails to create or submit one that meets all NCAA Division I Committee on Academics specifications, will be subject to the following prescribed penalties:

1. A presumption that any related penalty waiver requests will be denied; and
2. Notification to the institution's chancellor or president and conference office that the institution failed to create or submit an acceptable APR Improvement Plan.

### **Implementation Requirements.**

Staff will review all implementation reports. An APR Improvement Plan is considered to be implemented when:

1. The institution demonstrated that the essential steps outlined for goals designed to address critical issues have been completed;
2. The institution achieved or demonstrated progress toward the measurable goals established to address critical issues;
3. The individuals responsible for the goals/steps designed to address critical issues contributed to their completion and/or attempted completion; and
4. If the institution did not implement the steps outlined in the plan, the institution provided:
  - a. Evidence that the team's critical issue was effectively addressed by an alternative goal or method not reflected in the original plan; or
  - b. Objective data that demonstrates that the issue is no longer a critical issue impacting the team's academic, retention or graduation performance.

An APR Improvement Plan is considered not implemented when:

1. The institution demonstrated that the essential steps outlined for goals designed to address critical issues have not been completed; or
2. The institution did not achieve or demonstrate progress toward the measurable goals in the goals established to address critical issues.

In addition, an implementation report from a limited-resource institution hoping to access the limited-resource filters must include a signed statement from the chancellor or president on the effectiveness of the goals that were implemented. The report must also show that all essential goals tied to a team's critical issues were implanted as well as a progress report on any long-term goals.

### **New or Revised APR Improvement Plan Requirements.**

APR Improvement Plans must have the following elements to meet submission requirements and receive a staff evaluation:

1. Broad-Based Participation.

- The APR Improvement Plan shall be developed with significant input from appropriate institutional constituent groups inside and outside of athletics.
2. Institutional Approval.
    - The completed APR Improvement Plan must be reviewed and approved by the chancellor or president, to ensure that it represents the commitment and support of the entire institution to improve the team's APR.
  3. Analysis of Data.
    - a. Institutions must provide a meaningful analysis of the team's most current APR data. To document the analysis, the institution must upload any documents, charts, spreadsheets, etc. that were used by the APR Improvement Plan team during its analysis of data. The NCAA also provides a data analysis tool on the Committee on Academics' portion of the NCAA website.
    - b. The data analysis submitted by the institution must include the following information:
      - (1) The entering profile of student-athletes in the four-year cohort of the affected team(s) (e.g., high school core-course grade-point average, two-year transferable credits, ACT/SAT score, etc.);
      - (2) An accounting of all points lost over the four years making up the multiyear APR. This should include a summary of lost eligibility and retention points, indication why points were lost as well as any themes in the point loss;
      - (3) Reasons for loss of eligibility point. Specifically, the progress-toward-degree requirement not satisfied by the student-athlete;
      - (4) Circumstances surrounding loss of retention point (e.g., professional departure, lack of playing time, suspension/dismissal, etc.); and
      - (5) Analysis of patterns and trends in the historical academic data (e.g., low average credit hours earned and term grade-point average in the fall, significant amount of "0/2s" by two-year transfers in final term of eligibility).
  4. Additional Required Elements of the APR Improvement Plan.
    - a. Plan Activity/Assessment.

- The APR Improvement Plan is a dynamic document. The institution should conduct regular assessments to determine if the critical issues, measurable goals and steps are still appropriate.
- b. Timely Development of Plan.
- The APR Improvement Plan must be developed in time for it to be effective for the current academic year.
- c. Identification of Issues.
- Institutions must identify critical issues currently impacting the team's APR based on the analysis of the team's APR data.
- d. Program Areas.
- The institution must identify one or more of the program areas identified by the Committee on Academics for each of the critical issues addressed by the institution.
- e. Specific and Measurable Goals.
- (1) The institution must identify at least one goal per issue. However, the issue may lead to multiple goals.
  - (2) Goals must be established in terms that are specific and measurable in order for the institution to determine if the goals have been achieved.
- f. Steps to Achieve Goals.
- The APR Improvement Plan must include specific, detailed steps the institution will take to achieve the goals in each initiative.
- g. Responsible Individuals.
- The institution must identify at least one institutional staff member responsible for carrying out the steps to achieve the goals.
- h. Timeline to Meet Goals.
- (1) The institution must include specific timetables to complete the steps to achieve the goals and timelines to meet the goals.

- (2) The timelines should refer to a point within the academic year, but need not be the next academic year if it is expected that the goal cannot be met immediately.
5. In addition to the list above, APR Improvement Plans developed by limited-resource institutions hoping to access the limited-resource filters must also include:
  - a. Goals that are performance based and outcome specific. They can include short- and long-term goals, but long-term goals should include short-term benchmarks to track progress;
  - b. Broad-based participation in the development, assessment and oversight of the plan including the institution's highest academic authority (e.g., provost). As appropriate the plan team should include representatives from any function or department of the institution that is required to complete a step (e.g., admissions, academic support, athletics administration, coaches, faculty groups, technology staff, purchasing, finance).
  - c. As a part of institutional approval, the institution must make the chancellor or president and the improvement plan team, including the highest ranking academic authority, available for a videoconference in which they outline the improvement plan in order to demonstrate involvement in its development and future implementation;
  - d. Projected single-year APR targets that elevate the team out of the penalty structure within four years; and
  - e. A reporting timeline created by the institution. NCAA staff must check in with the institution regarding progress on implementation before the implementation due date. The timeline can be adjusted if needed, but all adjustments must be communicated with NCAA staff.