



NCAA Division I Board of Directors Waiver Guidance for 2025-26 Eligibility

Question and Answer Document

On December 23, 2024, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors approved a waiver to permit student-athletes who attended and competed at a non-NCAA school for one or more years to remain eligible to compete in 2025-26 academic year if those student-athletes would have otherwise used their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year, and meet all other eligibility requirements (e.g., progress toward degree, five-year period of eligibility).

The following guidance is designed to assist the NCAA membership in understanding the scope of the waiver issued by the Board of Directors, December 23, 2024.

Question No. 1: What does the waiver do?

Answer: The waiver allows Division I student-athletes who enrolled full time and triggered the use of at least one season at a non-NCAA institution (e.g., NAIA, two-year college, international institution) to be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 academic year provided the student-athlete is otherwise academically and athletically eligible (e.g., meeting progress toward degree, enrolled full time, has time remaining in their period of eligibility, etc.).

Question No. 2: Who does the waiver apply to?

Answer: The waiver applies to Division I student-athletes who enrolled full time and triggered use of at least one season of competition at a non-NCAA institution (e.g., NAIA, two-year college, international institution), would have otherwise used their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year, and meet all other eligibility requirements (e.g., meeting progress toward degree, enrolled full time, has time remaining in their period of eligibility, etc.).

Question No. 3: If a student-athlete who previously attended a non-NCAA institution is currently attending a Division II or Division III institution and will exhaust their seasons of competition during the 2024-25 academic year, does this relief allow them to be eligible to compete at a Division I institution during the 2025-26 academic year?

Answer: Yes, provided they used at least one season of competition at the non-NCAA institution, satisfy all other waiver criteria, and meet all other eligibility requirements (e.g., progress toward degree, full-time enrollment, time remaining in their period of eligibility, etc.).

Question No. 4: Does the waiver apply to student-athletes who only triggered use of seasons at an NCAA institution, regardless of division?

Answer: No. The relief is specific to student-athletes who used at least one season of competition at non-NCAA institutions. It is not available to student-athletes who used four seasons of competition at NCAA institutions, regardless of division.

Question No. 5: If a student-athlete has time remaining in their period of eligibility to use during the 2025-26 academic year based on relief provided due to impacts of COVID-19, could they also

qualify for the relief provided by the Board of Directors to be eligible during the 2025-26 academic year?

Answer: Yes, provided the student-athlete used at least one season at a non-NCAA institution, is otherwise academically and athletically eligible to compete and has not already competed in four seasons at an NCAA institution (outside of COVID-19 relief).

Question No. 6: Does this relief provide an extension of the period of eligibility for student-athletes?

Answer: No. To qualify for the relief provided by the Board of Directors, a student-athlete must meet all other eligibility requirements, including the period of eligibility.

Question No. 7: If an institution previously submitted (e.g., before the Board of Directors waiver was approved) a season-of-competition waiver seeking eligibility for the 2025-26 academic year and the waiver was denied, can the student-athlete still qualify for this relief?

Answer: Yes, provided the student-athlete meets the criteria of the Board of Directors-approved waiver (used a season at a non-NCAA institution, has or will use their final season in 2024-25 academic year, and meets all other eligibility requirements).

Question No. 8: If a student-athlete receives an extension of eligibility waiver for the 2025-26 academic year, will they qualify for the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

Answer: An extension of eligibility waiver requires that a student-athlete must have a season of competition remaining. Therefore, if a student-athlete receives an extension of eligibility waiver for the 2025-26 academic year, the student-athlete already has a season of competition remaining and would not need the relief provided by the Board of Directors to be eligible to compete.

Question No. 9: If the only season a student-athlete used at a non-NCAA institution was the year for which the student-athlete received relief through the [NCAA Division I Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement Previously Approved Request List](#) due to the impacts of COVID-19, does the student qualify for relief here, as well?

Answer: No. If the student-athlete already received relief from their use of a season of competition at a non-NCAA institution either through the Previously Approved Request List or a traditional season-of-competition or hardship waiver, the student-athlete would not qualify for the relief provided by the Board of Directors.

Question No. 10: If a student-athlete is not meeting progress toward degree but is granted a waiver of the progress-toward-degree legislation to be eligible during the 2025-26 academic year, will they qualify for the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

Answer: Yes. Provided they meet all other waiver criteria.

Question No. 11: If a student-athlete is charged a season(s) due to delayed enrollment, can they qualify for this relief?

Answer: Yes, provided the student-athlete enrolled full time and triggered the use of at least one season of competition at a non-NCAA institution, would have otherwise used their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year, and meet all other eligibility requirements (e.g., meeting progress toward degree, full-time enrollment, five-year rule, etc.).

Question No. 12: How does the relief apply to multisport student-athletes (e.g., indoor and outdoor track) who exhausted seasons of competition in one sport during the 2023-24 academic year, but will use their final season of competition in the second sport during the 2024-25 academic year?

Answer: The relief is sport specific and only applies to the sport in which the student-athlete uses their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year.

Example No. 1: Fall/winter sports.

Academic Year	Institution	Eligibility Period	Season Used
2020-21	NAIA	1	None, due to COVID (relief through SAR PAL)
2021-22	Two-Year	2	1
2022-23	Division I	3	2
2023-24	Division I	4	3
2024-25	Division I	5	4

Is this student-athlete eligible to compete during the **2025-26** academic year based on the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

Yes, provided the student-athlete meets all other eligibility requirements (e.g., progress toward degree, period of eligibility, etc.). The student-athlete previously enrolled full time and triggered the use of at least one season at a non-NCAA institution and did not receive COVID-19 relief or a traditional season-of-competition waiver for one of those years, in this case during the 2021-22 academic year. Further, the student-athlete used their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year, and has time remaining in their period of eligibility (*assuming institution applies the COVID-19 extension of eligibility waiver in accordance with the NCAA Division I Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement Previously Approved Request List*); therefore, the student-athlete could be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 academic year.

Example No. 2: Fall/winter sports.

Academic Year	Institution	Eligibility Period	Season Used
2020-21	Division I	1	None, due to COVID relief
2021-22	Two-Year	2	1
2022-23	Division I	3	2
2023-24	Division I	4	3
2024-25	Division I	5	4

Is this student-athlete eligible to compete during the **2025-26** academic year based on the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

Yes, provided the student-athlete meet all other eligibility requirements (e.g., progress toward degree, period of eligibility, etc.). The student-athlete previously enrolled full time and triggered the use of at least one season at a non-NCAA institution, in this case during the 2021-22 academic year. Further, the student-athlete used their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year; therefore, the student-athlete could be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 academic year (*assuming institution applies the COVID-19 extension of eligibility waiver in accordance with the NCAA Division I Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement Previously Approved Request List*).

Example No. 3: Fall/winter sports.

Academic Year	Institution	Eligibility Period	Season Used
2018-19	Division I	1	None, due to redshirt
2019-20	Two-Year	2	1
2020-21	Two-Year	3	None, due to COVID (relief through SAR PAL)
2021-22	Division I	4	2
2022-23	Division I	5	None, due to injury
2023-24	Division I	6	3
2024-25	Division I	7	4

Is this student-athlete eligible to compete during the **2025-26** academic year based on the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

No. The student-athlete received COVID relief (*COVID-19 season-of-competition and extension of eligibility waivers in accordance with the NCAA Division I Committee on Student-Athlete*

Reinstatement Previously Approved Request List) and a traditional extension of eligibility waiver to be eligible during the 2024-25 academic year. Although the student-athlete previously enrolled full time, triggered the use of at least one season at a non-NCAA institution, and used their final season of competition during the 2024-25 academic year, the student-athlete does not have any time remaining in their period of eligibility. Therefore, the student-athlete would not be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 academic year.

Example No. 4: Spring sports.

Academic Year	Institution	Eligibility Clock	Season Used
2018-19	Division I	1	None
2019-20	Two-Year	2	None, due to COVID (relief through SAR PAL)
2020-21	Two-Year	3	None
2021-22	Two-Year	4	1
2022-23	Division I	5	None
2023-24	Division II	6	2

Is this student-athlete eligible to compete during the **2025-26** academic year based on the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

No. The student-athlete qualified for the self-applied COVID extension of eligibility waiver to be eligible to compete during the 2024-25 academic year. However, although the student-athlete previously enrolled full time and triggered the use of at least one season at a non-NCAA institution and the student-athlete has seasons of competition remaining, the student-athlete does not have any time remaining in their period of eligibility. Therefore, the student-athlete would not be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 academic year.

Example No. 5: Fall/winter sports.

Academic Year	Institution	Eligibility Clock	Season Used
2020-21	Two-Year	1	None, due to COVID (Relief through the SAR PAL)
2021-22	Division I	2	1
2022-23	Division I	3	2
2023-24	Division I	4	3
2024-25	Division I	5	4

Is this student-athlete eligible to compete during the **2025-26** academic year based on the relief provided by the Board of Directors?

No. Although the student-athlete qualified for the self-applied COVID extension of eligibility waiver to be eligible during the 2024-25 academic year, the student-athlete already received relief from their use of a season of competition at the non-NCAA institution during the 2020-21 academic year through the NCAA Division I Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement Previously Approved Request List and the student-athlete does not have any seasons of competition remaining. Therefore, the student-athlete would not be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 academic year.