NCAA Division I Legislative Relief
Information Standards, Guidelines and Directives
(Updated September 9, 2026)

The NCAA Division I Cabinet has authority for legislative relief waivers for NCAA Division I sports that do not have an oversight committee (e.g., sports without NCAA championship such as national collegiate, emerging sports) as well as requests involving the following bylaws: Institutional control (NCAA Division I Bylaw 8), ethical conduct (Bylaw 10), financial aid (Bylaw 15), awards and benefits (Bylaw 16) and governance structure and committees (Bylaw 21).

The sports oversight committees' authority extends to legislative relief waivers of conduct of athletics personnel (Bylaw 11), recruiting (Bylaw 13), playing and practice seasons (Bylaw 17) and processes and procedures related to the administration of the regular seasons and championships (Bylaw 31).

The NCAA Division I Academics and Eligibility Committee was developed to establish a single committee responsible for matters governing eligibility. The NCAA Division I Academic Eligibility Subcommittee has authority for legislative relief waivers related to academic eligibility (Bylaw 14). The subcommittee generally has authority for legislative relief waivers related to athletics eligibility (Bylaw 12). Authority includes review of individual waivers as well as the ability to issue blanket waivers.

Legislative relief waivers that impact more than one sport will be reviewed by the Division I Cabinet and may receive feedback from the applicable committees that will be impacted by the legislative relief waiver decision. In situations in which committees provide differing feedback on waiver decisions, the Division I Cabinet may request each committee review impacted legislation and provide legislative recommendations that would respond to the positions of a specific committee.

The committee with authority may waive the application of a rule when the circumstances of the case do not fit the intended consequences of the rule, even when the result could be a temporary rule change.

Some potential guidelines for the committee when considering such an issue are below:

1. Minimal to no competitive or recruiting advantage will result from the waiver being granted.

2. Student-athletes collectively benefit from the granted waiver (as opposed to a select group of student-athletes benefiting at the cost of others).

3. The activity being prohibited from the rule appears to be an unintended consequence.

The committee believes that implementing any widespread, long-term changes should ultimately be accomplished through the legislative process. However, with the alteration of the timeline of the current legislative process and the less bureaucratic, more responsive philosophy, the committee believes that short-term relief may be provided to student-athletes when circumstances meet the information standards, guidelines and directives included in this document.

Bylaw 11.

Individual Associated with a Prospective Student-Athlete – Football Bowl Subdivision, Men's Basketball and Women's Basketball [Bylaws 11.4.2, 11.4.3, 11.4.4, 13.8.3.2, 13.8.3.3 and 13.8.3.4] -- Legislative Relief Information Standards.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball and Football Bowl Subdivision Oversight Committees approved the continued application of this information standard which has been in place since November 2017. Specifically, an institution seeking a waiver involving individuals associated with a prospective student-athlete legislation in the sports of Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football and men's basketball and individuals associated with a recruited prospective student-athlete legislation in the sport of women's basketball will be required to provide the following:

1. Statement from the institution detailing the following:

    a. How the individual triggered the definition of an individual associated with a prospective student-athlete.

    b. Chronology of events related to the hire.

        (1) Date the institution posted job description for the noncoaching staff or strength and conditioning coach position;

        (2) Documentation that the institution followed its normal process for posting open positions;

        (3) Number of applicants who applied for the position;

        (4) Date of the individual associated with a prospective student-athlete's interview;

        (5) Date of the institution's offer of employment or intent to hire the individual associated with a prospective student-athlete;

        (6) Date the institution began recruiting the prospective student-athlete;

        (7) Date the prospective student-athlete committed to the institution;

        (8) Information regarding whether or not the position is an already established position or a new position;

        (9) Events that led to the hire (e.g., previous relationship); and

        (10) Statement from head coach regarding decision to hire individual associated with the prospective student-athlete.

2. Statement from individual associated with a prospective student-athlete detailing the following:

a. Involvement in the prospective student-athlete's recruitment at the institution and if applicable, at the previous institution.

b. Statement detailing the nature of the contact (e.g., type of contact, duration, was there a break in communication) throughout the relationship with the prospective student-athlete.

c. An explanation regarding the contact made with the prospective student-athlete regarding the individual associated with a prospective student-athlete's employment (e.g., was the individual associated with a prospective student-athlete aware of the institution's recruitment of the prospective student-athlete?).

3. Statement from the prospective student-athlete detailing the following:

a. Individual associated with a prospective student-athlete's involvement in the prospective student-athlete's recruitment at the institution and if applicable, at the previous institution.

b. The nature of the contact (e.g., type of contact, duration, was there a break) throughout the relationship with the individual associated with the prospective student-athlete?

c. An explanation regarding the contact made with the individual associated with a prospective student-athlete regarding his or her possible employment (e.g., was the prospective student-athlete aware of the individual associated with a prospective student-athlete's interest in a position at the institution?).

d. Statement from prospective student-athlete explaining enrollment decision.

4. If the involved prospective student-athlete is transferring from an NCAA four-year institution, a statement from administration at the previous institution indicating its support for the transfer; and

5. After thorough review of the information presented, the NCAA legislative relief staff will review and consider the intent of the legislation and determine whether the facts presented provided the institution with a recruiting advantage.

Bylaw 13.

1. Notification of Transfer Outside Transfer Windows [Division I Bylaws 13.1.1.3.1 and 13.1.1.3.2] – Information Standards, Guidelines and Directives.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Cabinet approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since May 14, 2024. Waiver requests to enter a student-athlete into the NCAA Transfer Portal outside of a student-athlete's sport-specific transfer window will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Cases asserting academic or athletics reasons (e.g., lack of participation opportunity, change in role or position, change

or reduction of playing time, coaching change occurring more than 30 days prior) and lack of knowledge of legislation should be denied.

Staff may only consider relief when the following exists:

a. Contemporaneous, objective documentation demonstrating the student-athlete needs to be entered into the NCAA Transfer Portal because of an exigent event outside the student-athlete's control unrelated to athletics opportunities or participation at their current institution that demands the student-athlete's immediate departure from the institution (e.g., physical or sexual assault); and

b. The exigent event occurred after the student-athlete's most recent opportunity to be entered into the NCAA Transfer Portal (e.g., transfer window) concluded.

Pursuant to the legislative relief waiver policies and procedures, legislative relief waivers of the notification of transfer window legislation will not be considered urgent requests.

2. Local Sports Clubs [Bylaws 13.11.2.4 and 13.11.2.4.1] – Information Standards.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Cabinet approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since October 2002.

If an institution is seeking a waiver on behalf of a prospective student-athlete to allow participation in local sports clubs beyond the permissible 50-mile limitation, the following information must be submitted:

a. Documentation of other opportunities (if any) for clubs that exist within the 50-mile radius; or

b. Other opportunities outside the 50-mile radius without institutional involvement. If there are other club opportunities available to the prospective student-athlete within the 50-mile radius, the request will be denied unless extenuating circumstances are presented.

If an institution is seeking a waiver on behalf of one of its coaches to participate in a local sports club that does not meet the legislation, the following information must be submitted:

a. Documentation of the extenuating circumstances that caused the waiver to be submitted; and

b. An indication of the time frame of the coach's continued involvement with the club team. If the institution is seeking a waiver to permit the coach to continue with a club indefinitely or for a substantial amount of time, the request will be denied.

Lastly, in all local sports club requests, required documentation includes a statement from the institution indicating whether the institution is recruiting the involved prospective

student-athlete and whether it is willing to abstain from recruiting the prospective student-athlete if the waiver is granted.

Bylaw 15.

1. Retroactive Financial Aid [Bylaw 15.3.1.3] – Guidelines.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Cabinet approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since October 2002. The following guidelines for the staff to consider in evaluating retroactive financial aid cases were approved:

a. Prior to the student-athlete commencing the academic work, it was agreed by the student-athlete and the coaching staff, financial aid officer or other involved institutional administrator that the student- athlete would receive financial aid for the credit hours; and
b. Except for an administrative error or lack of communication, the student-athlete would have received the aid.

2. Period of Award (One-Year Period) and Assertions Involving Misinformation or Misapplication of the Legislation [Bylaw 15.3.3.1] – Guideline.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Cabinet approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since March 2010. It was determined that cases involving assertions of misinformation or a lack of information from institutional personnel (e.g., compliance, financial aid office, coaching staff member) for waivers of Bylaw 15.3.3.1 would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis; however, the group was inclined to deny.

Bylaw 17.

1. Maximum Contest Limitations in the Sport of Basketball [Bylaw 17.4.5] – Information Standards and Guidelines.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Oversight Committees approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since January 2019. For a waiver of the maximum contest limits in the sport of basketball to be granted, an institution must demonstrate the requested relief is due to documented mitigating circumstances outside of the institution's control and directly impacts the institution's basketball team. If an institution fails to document unique, mitigating circumstances outside of the institution's control, the waivershould be denied.

There was agreement that while it will continue to review requests on a case-by-case basis, the most common assertions submitted as mitigating circumstances are outlined in the remainder of this section.

2. <u>Assertions of Institutional Error Due to Misinformation</u>.

a. Guidelines.

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Oversight Committees approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since January 2019. The following guidelines and information standards for assertions of an institutional error as the basis for relief of the maximum contest limits in the sport of basketball were developed:

(1) In cases where the institutional error led to the institution entering into a contract to participate in a contest that would cause the institution to exceedthe maximum contest limits and applicant institution documented that it relied on misinformation when entering into the contract, relief may be provided with the conditions that the waiver be approved on a one-time basis and future waivers may be denied and that the team reduce its maximum contest limit by one the following academic year. Additionally, the institution's president/chancellor may receive a letter detailing the institutional error.

(2) If the institution provides documentation demonstrating institutional error but the institution is not at its maximum contest limits, the case should be denied.

(3) If the institution is unable to provide documentation demonstrating institutional error, the case should be denied.

b. Information Standards.

It was determined that if an institution asserts institutional error as a mitigating circumstance for relief of the maximum contest limit, the following must be included in the request:

(1) A written statement of explanation from the person or persons responsible for or accused of providing erroneous information, which summarizes the information given to the individual(s) responsible for basketball scheduling and game contracts;

(2) Contemporaneous documentation demonstrating the misadvise (e.g., notes, approval of game contracts, etc.);

(3) A statement from the compliance staff detailing the chronology of events and education provided to individuals(s) responsible for basketball scheduling and game contracts, including information regarding the institution's knowledge of the multiple-team event educational column and why the compliance staff was not involved prior to the individual(s) signing the contract for the institution's basketball team to participate in the multiple-team event;

(4) A statement from the individual(s) responsible for signing a game contract demonstrating whether the individual(s), in good faith, relied on the erroneous information to the institution's detriment; and

(5) A statement of support for the waiver from the institution's athletics director.

3. Requests to Waive Outside Competition Legislation [Bylaw 17.31.1] – Directive.

Men's Lacrosse: Minto Cup and Mann Cup.

During a July 2026 meeting, the Division I Men's Lacrosse Oversight Committee approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since October 2006. Based on the extended history of the Canadian Minto Cup and Mann Cup (since 1901), the small number of student-athletes participating each year (four to six) and the amateur nature of the competition, relief via the waiver process could be provided as long as the student-athletes are missing no more than two days (i.e., 48 hours) of class and/or campus time (including weekends).

It was determined that minimizing the amount of missed class time is consistent with the intent of the legislation and the overall principle that student-athletes should miss minimal class and/or campus time due to outside competition occurring during the regular academic year.

4. Guidelines for Waivers Involving Bylaws 14.3.2.3 (Outside Competition – Nonqualifier) and 17.31.1 (Outside Competition – Sports Other Than Basketball).

During an August 2026 meeting, the Division I Cabinet approved the continued application of this directive which has been in place since March 2014. Relief may be provided for waivers involving Bylaws 14.3.2.3 and 17.31.1 for nonqualifiers to practice or compete on an outside team during the academic year of residence.

Specifically, relief could only be provided when the following information or circumstances are presented:

a. The competition must be elite-level competition (e.g., national team);

b. The competition occurs during a vacation period between terms and **during a holiday or official vacation period as listed on the institution's academic calendar;** the student-athlete shall not miss class time or other academic support (e.g., tutoring);

c. The competition is limited to one event during the first regular academic term and a maximum of two events per year;

d. The student-athlete must meet all NCAA and conference progress-toward-degree requirements and be in good academic standing as defined by the institution; and

e. The waiver request must include a letter of support from the faculty athletics representative.

It was noted that waivers of this legislation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.