



**Former Student-Athlete Degree Completion  
Assistance for Men's and Women's Basketball  
Questions and Answers  
Updated: November 19, 2019**

**Background.**

**Question No. 1:** Why is the NCAA providing funding and/or requiring institutions to provide funding for degree completion of former student-athletes?

**Answer:** Institutions should commit to providing opportunity and support for basketball student-athletes who wish to return to school to complete an undergraduate degree.

**Question No. 2:** Why is the degree-completion fund open to all basketball student-athletes instead of only those pursuing a professional basketball career?

**Answer:** The working group of the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics believed degree-completion programs should be offered to as many student-athletes as possible while acknowledging the limited scope of the Commission on College Basketball Report. A very limited number of student-athletes leave college early to pursue a professional career and often those student-athletes attend institutions that already offer degree-completion programs. The working group determined that a broader, more impactful approach was appropriate.

**Question No. 3:** Why is the mandate for degree-completion programs limited to only basketball and not all sports?

**Answer:** The working group had lengthy discussions on this question and initially considered recommending a mandate that would include all sports. However, the working group acknowledged that the Commission report focused on men's and women's basketball and before offering a broader mandate, the working group felt it was important to consider membership feedback. The feedback from the membership generally and the NCAA Division I Council specifically, suggested a more conservative approach and the working group agreed to suggest a more limited scope to start. In addition, the working group recommended that the committee evaluate the new legislation and determine whether the mandate should be expanded in the future.

**Question No. 4:** How does reclassification to Division I affect the degree-completion program requirements?

**Answer:** An institution reclassifying to Division I will be expected to satisfy the requirements set forth in the degree-completion program requirements in year one of the reclassifying process. During year one, they can be included in the

limited-resource calculation and if identified as a limited-resource institution, can access the Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Fund.

### **Former Student-Athlete Degree-Completion Program Requirements.**

**Question No. 1:** How is a former student-athlete defined?

**Answer:** For the purposes of the NCAA financial aid legislation, a former student-athlete is defined as one who has exhausted his or her five-year period of eligibility. Additionally, a student-athlete who is permanently ineligible to participate in intercollegiate competition due to a violation of NCAA amateurism and athletics eligibility regulations (e.g., signed an agreement with a professional organization, secured the services of an agent, exhausted eligibility due to delayed-enrollment penalties) but is still within his or her five-year period of eligibility and who returns to the institution with no intent to participate in athletics shall be considered a former student-athlete for the purposes of the NCAA financial aid legislation.

**Question No. 2:** What are institutions required to fund for former basketball student-athletes meeting the specific criteria?

**Answer:** Institutions are required to provide funding for tuition, books and fees for former men's and women's basketball players who meet the specific criteria.

**Question No. 3:** What requirements must a student-athlete satisfy in order to be eligible for the degree-completion program?

**Answer:** A student-athlete must satisfy the following requirements in order to be eligible for the degree-completion program?

1. Must have completed two years of academic work at the institution;
2. Must have left the institution in good academic standing and meeting all progress-toward-degree benchmarks;
3. Must have been on athletics aid;
4. Must exhaust other available funding options (e.g., National Basketball Association Tuition Reimbursement);
5. Fewer than 10 years have elapsed since the student-athlete departed the institution;

6. Has not attended another school full time since his or her departure; and
7. Student-athlete is subject to institutional admissions and financial aid policies.

**Question No. 4:** How is “eligible” defined to determine whether a returning student-athlete can access the degree-completion fund?

**Answer:** The student-athlete must have been academically eligible to compete had he or she returned to your institution at the point in which he or she left, be in good standing (academic and institutional) and subject to institutional admissions and financial aid policies.

**Question No. 5:** How many credits are the institutions required to fund for a returning basketball student-athlete?

**Answer:** The institution is required to fund the number of credits remaining for graduation upon initial re-enrollment and application for funding. If the returning student-athlete subsequently changes his/her major or does not earn the necessary grades for graduation requirements, the institution is NOT required to fund any additional credits added to their graduation plan that result.

**Question No. 6:** If institutions do not have funding budgeted for former student-athlete degree completion in the current year, can they advise the former student-athlete to seek funding in a future term/year?

**Answer:** No. Institutions are required to provide degree completion assistance to all eligible student-athletes regardless of timing, funding availability, etc.

**Question No. 7:** Can institutions establish an application schedule with specified deadlines for former student-athletes?

**Answer:** Yes. Institutions can establish deadlines and deny funding if applications are not submitted by the published deadlines. Note: The deadlines must be on or after deadlines established for the NCAA Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Fund.

**Question No. 8:** Would the student-athlete have had to compete during his or her last season on campus to be eligible to access the degree-completion fund?

**Answer:** No. The student-athlete must have received athletics aid, but it is not required that he or she competed in their last season on campus.

**Question No. 9:** Are institutions required to provide academic support services to returning student-athletes accessing the NCAA degree-completion fund?

**Answer:** No. However, it is a best practice recommended in order to ensure student-athletes' successes.

**Question No. 10:** Are there requirements for returning student-athletes to receive continued funding?

**Answer:** Yes. Returning student-athletes are required to maintain an institutional term grade-point average of a 2.0 to receive required funding. The former student-athlete is afforded a one-time forgiveness exception for dropping below the 2.0 institutional term grade-point average. If a returning student-athlete fails to earn an institutional term grade-point average of 2.0 during two or more academic terms, the institution may continue funding but is not required to do so per the NCAA legislation. Furthermore, an institution may NOT discontinue funding for returning student-athletes who are not meeting major grade-point average requirements but have a 2.0 institutional term grade-point average.

**Question No. 11:** Is there a time limitation on how long institutions are obligated to provide funding to former student-athletes accessing the degree-completion fund?

**Answer:** An institution is only required under the legislation to provide funding within the 10 years from when the student-athlete departed the institution. Thus, a student-athlete who begins courses before the end of the 10 years is not grandfathered in to complete the degree when the 10 years expire. However, an institution can provide funding beyond 10 years at its discretion.

**Question No. 12:** Can an institution impose a timeline for when a former student-athlete must complete his or her degree?

**Answer:** Institutional policy will apply when determining if an institution can impose a timeline for completion of degree for a returning student-athlete.

**Question No. 13:** Does this proposal apply to student-athletes who departed the institution before the effective date?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question No. 14:** Does this proposal apply to walk-on men's and women's basketball student-athletes?

**Answer:** No.

**Question No. 15:** Are former student-athletes required to enroll full time in order to receive degree completion assistance.

**Answer:** No.

**Question No. 16:** Are former student-athletes permitted to enroll in online courses.

**Answer:** Yes, former student-athletes are permitted to enroll in online courses; however, for a former student-athlete to receive degree completion assistance, he or she must be enrolled in the online courses through the certifying institution. Furthermore, institutional policy will apply when determining if an institution can require a former student-athlete to complete a course in person rather than taking the online option.

**Question No. 17:** Are former student-athletes required to have continuous enrollment to receive continued funding?

**Answer:** The former student-athlete is permitted to discontinue enrollment one time and remain eligible for future funding; however, the individual will be required to submit a full application upon re-enrollment.

**Other.**

**Question No. 1:** What benefits are former student-athletes eligible to receive?

**Answer:** Former student-athletes are permitted to receive the NCAA Division I Bylaw 16 benefits incidental to his or her status as a student-athlete (e.g., counseling and tutoring services, academic support, career counseling, personal development services that support the success of the student-athletes, etc.). However, former student-athletes are not permitted to receive benefits incidental to practice or competition (e.g., entertainment, tickets, etc.).

**Question No. 2:** Will there be a reporting requirement for any former men's and women's basketball student-athletes who were funded?

**Answer:** Yes, during data collection each fall, institutions will be required to submit the following information for all former basketball student-athletes who received funding during the previous academic year:

1. Major;
2. Total credit hours required for degree;
3. Cumulative credit hours earned toward degree;
4. Credit hours attempted;
5. Credit hours earned;
6. Degree applicable credit hours;
7. Term grade-point average; and
8. Cumulative grade-point average.

**Question No. 3:** Will former student-athletes negatively impact my institution's academic rates?

**Answer:** In general, the former student-athlete should not have a negative impact on the team's academic rates (i.e., NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate, Graduation Success Rate, Federal Graduation Rate) and most former student-athletes will meet a current policy to be excluded from a cohort upon their re-enrollment. As other cases arise, they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the committee.

**Question No. 4:** My institution has a well-established degree-completion program for all returning student-athletes. The program requirements for continued funding include other requirements beyond a term grade-point average of a 2.0, can those requirements still be applied to returning men's and women's basketball student-athletes?

**Answer:** Yes. If institutions have identified meaningful program requirements that promote success for returning student-athletes, those requirements can continue to be required. However, an institution may not discontinue funding for returning student-athletes who do not meet the nonacademic requirements (e.g., meetings with tutors, community service, etc.).

**Question No. 5:** Are former men's and women's basketball players eligible to apply for funding through the previously established NCAA Division I Degree Completion Program?

**Answer:** Yes. If former men's and women's basketball players are beyond 10 years from departing campus or do not meet any other criteria for degree completion funding that is required under NCAA Division I Bylaw 3.2.4.24, they can apply for funding through the Degree Completion Program provided they meet the specified criteria of that program.

**Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Fund.**

**Institutional Criteria:** Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Fund is available for member institutions who meet the criteria set by the committee to be classified as a limited-resource institution in any of the previous five years.

**Question No. 1:** How are applications for the fund submitted?

**Answer:** Institutional representatives will nominate former basketball student-athletes meeting the specified criteria through the NCAA Program Hub. The former student-athlete will be notified via email that they have been nominated to apply and will be responsible for submitting a completed application by the published deadline.

**Question No. 2:** What information is required with the initial application?

**Answer:**

1. Attestation form signed by the student-athlete stating the following:
  - (a) He or she is not eligible for funding from any other degree-completion program or professional sports contract, team or league;
  - (b) He or she was last enrolled full time at the institution within the previous 10 years;
  - (c) Major; and
  - (d) Legal release statement to allow for academic information to be shared with the NCAA related to this program.
2. Attestation form signed by an institutional authority that the student-athlete meets the following requirements:
  - (a) Student-athlete has been re-admitted to the institution;

- (b) Credit hours and terms of enrollment completed during previous enrollment;
  - (c) Confirmation the student-athlete was eligible for competition at the time of departure; and
  - (d) Confirmation the student-athlete received athletically related financial aid during his or her previous enrollment.
3. Graduation plan: A listing of courses required for graduation through completion of the degree program.
- (a) Graduation plans must be signed by an advisor or other academic authority at the institution; and
  - (b) Graduation plans must clearly present the number of hours required for completion of the degree.
4. Confirmation from financial aid of the amount required to cover tuition, fees and books for the upcoming term.
5. Official transcript.
6. Degree audit.

**Question No. 3:** If an institution no longer is designated as a limited-resource institution within the last five years, are former student-athletes still able to receive funding through the Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Fund?

**Answer:** No. If institutions are no longer designated as a limited-resource institution within the last five years, the institution now assumes responsibility for providing tuition, fees, books as part of the Division I membership requirement.

**Question No. 4:** Are there requirements for student-athletes to receive continued funding?

**Answer:** Yes. Returning student-athletes are required to maintain an institutional term grade-point average of a 2.0 to receive required funding. If a returning student-athlete does NOT earn an institutional term grade-point average of 2.0, the student-athlete cannot request additional funding through the Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Fund.