



NCAA Division III Management Council Subcommittee for Legislative Relief Question & Answer Guide for the March 24, 2023, Blanket Waiver of Graduate/Postbaccalaureate Student Eligibility

Currently in Division III, per Bylaw 14.1.8, a student who has graduated from an NCAA Division III institution may participate as a graduate or postbaccalaureate student at the Division III institution they most recently attended as an undergraduate or another Division III institution. Students who graduate from non-Division III institutions are required to secure a legislative relief waiver before they are permitted to participate as graduate or postbaccalaureate students.

This document is meant to aid the membership in self-applying blanket relief of Bylaw 14.1.8 and it is specific to certifying graduate and postbaccalaureate students as eligible for Division III participation. The document does **not** address enrollment requirements for these students. If an institution has questions about enrollment for the 2023-24 academic year, it should consult Bylaw 14.1.7.1.7.2, the [academic year blanket waiver for full-time enrollment](#) and/or submit questions to NCAA staff through RSRO.

General questions.

Question No. 1: What does the blanket waiver permit?

Answer: The blanket waiver permits student-athletes who graduated from a non-Division III institution to participate in Division III athletics as a graduate or postbaccalaureate student, provided they meet the previously established standards of the directive for graduate/postbaccalaureate student participation.

Question No. 2: What are the previously established standards of the directive for graduate/postbaccalaureate student participation?

Answer: To qualify for this relief, a student-athlete must meet **all** the following standards:

- The student graduated with their undergraduate degree within four academic years;
- The student completed their undergraduate degree without any breaks in full-time enrollment; and
- The student has at least one season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation, regardless of where (e.g., other NCAA division, NAIA) the participation occurs.

Question No. 3: When is the blanket relief effective?

Answer: The blanket relief is effective for those individuals enrolling as graduate or postbaccalaureate students during the 2023-24 academic year. The NCAA

Division III Subcommittee for Legislative Relief will consider whether additional relief is appropriate following the 2023-24 academic year and the membership will be notified accordingly.

Question No. 4: If the student-athlete is not enrolling until the 2024 fall term or later, may they be certified using the blanket waiver?

Answer: No. Student-athletes enrolling, or being certified for participation, for the 2024-25 academic year must not be certified until the NCAA Division III Subcommittee for Legislative Relief determines a process for that academic year.

Question No. 5: Where can I find more information on this blanket relief?

Answer: More information on the blanket relief can be found on the NCAA Subcommittee for Legislative Relief blanket waiver page on [ncaa.org](https://www.ncaa.org). Institutions may also consult RSRO Case No. 1190409 for additional information regarding the specific relief.

Applying the blanket relief.

The following section contains questions applicable to each standard of the directive for graduate/postbaccalaureate student participation. Additional questions should be submitted to NCAA staff through RSRO.

The student graduated with their undergraduate degree within four academic years.

Question No. 1: To whom does this blanket relief apply?

Answer: All graduates of non-Division III institutions. Examples include graduates of NCAA Division I, NCAA Division II, NAIA, or international institutions.

Question No. 2: If a student graduated from a non-Division III institution but never participated in athletics, must they meet the standards of the directive for graduate/postbaccalaureate student participation?

Answer: Yes. Bylaw 14.1.8 is specific to graduates of Division III institutions and, therefore, the blanket relief is also specific to graduates, not just student-athletes.

Question No. 3: Is summer coursework considered “within” the academic year?

Answer: Yes. Academic coursework completed in the summer immediately following the student-athlete's academic year would be considered part of that

academic year. For example: if the student-athlete's fourth year of collegiate enrollment was the 2022-23 academic year, coursework completed in the summer of 2023 would be considered part of the fourth academic year and the student-athlete would meet this condition of the directive.

Question No. 4: When is the earliest date that a student-athlete's information may be certified under the blanket relief?

Answer: Student-athletes cannot be certified under the blanket relief until they have officially graduated from their undergraduate institution. This is because proper certification/processing requires a transcript that confirms an undergraduate degree has been conferred and that the grade point average is final.

The student completed their undergraduate degree without any breaks in full-time enrollment.

Question No. 1: Does having used a legislated exception in the past constitute a break in full-time enrollment for purposes of the blanket relief?

Answer: No. Qualifying for a legislated exception to full-time enrollment (e.g., the final-term exception) does not constitute a break in full-time enrollment and does not affect a student-athlete's ability to qualify for the blanket relief.

Question No. 2: Does taking time off between undergraduate and graduate/postbaccalaureate studies constitute a break in full-time enrollment for purposes of the blanket relief?

Answer: No. A March 21, 2018, official interpretation in LSDBi confirms that participation as a graduate/postbaccalaureate student is not predicated upon continuous enrollment. A student does not need to be enrolled in the semester immediately before their postgraduate participation and, therefore, a student-athlete's time off does not affect their ability to qualify for blanket relief.

Question No. 3: Are there any considerations for an international student-athlete?

Answer: If working with an international student-athlete whose undergraduate institution was not on a traditional full-time structure, it is incumbent upon your institution to obtain documentation on the undergraduate institution's full-time enrollment structure to confirm whether the student-athlete is meeting the standard for blanket relief.

The student has at least one season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation, regardless of where (e.g., other NCAA division, NAIA) the participation occurs.

Question No. 1: What does it mean to have a season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation?

Answer: Bylaw 14.2.4.1 considers a season of participation to be triggered when a student-athlete participates (practices or competes) during or after the first contest in the traditional segment or when the student-athlete engages in intercollegiate competition during the nontraditional segment in that sport. This is different from other divisions or associations, which may have student-athletes “redshirt” and never trigger a season because they never compete.

A student-athlete who “redshirts” and then competes during the remaining three years of their undergraduate experience at a non-Division III institution would not be considered to have a season of participation remaining per Division III legislation and, as a result, would not qualify for the blanket relief.

If a Transfer Portal entry or tracer form indicates that the student-athlete participated but was not charged a season, an institution is advised to contact the undergraduate institution for more details to determine if the student-athlete truly has a season remaining per Division III legislation.

Question No. 2: How can Question 1 be true if Bylaw 14.2.4.1.4 exists?

Answer: Bylaw 14.2.4.1.4 is specific to undergraduate transfer student-athletes and does not apply to graduate or postbaccalaureate students. Further, for purposes of Division III legislation graduate and postbaccalaureate students are not transfers, as they are not required to meet a transfer exception to participate.

Question No. 3: If a student-athlete received a medical hardship during their undergraduate career does that mean they have a season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation?

Answer: Yes.

Question No. 4: If a student-athlete has a “COVID season(s)” does that mean they have a season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation?

Answer: Yes. While the Division III COVID-19 relief was specific to Division III student-athletes only, the NCAA Division III Subcommittee for Legislative

Relief determined that it is appropriate to honor COVID-19 relief from other divisions/associations for purposes of the “season of participation” standard of the blanket relief.

Question No. 5: What are some examples of student-athletes who do, and do not, have a season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation?

Answer: The following chart includes examples of student-athlete participation histories that an institution may encounter. Please note that the chart is not exhaustive and, instead, is meant to serve as a guide as institutions work with graduate or postbaccalaureate students.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	DIII Seasons remaining
Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	0
Redshirt: practiced, only	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	0
Redshirt: practiced, only	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	COVID-19 relief	1
Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	Medical hardship	Practiced & competed	1
Did not participate in athletics	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	1
Practiced & competed	Practiced & competed	COVID-19 relief	COVID-19 relief	2

* Please note that the chart, above, does not reflect students who graduated in more than four years of undergraduate enrollment, as such a student would not qualify for the blanket relief.

Student-athletes who do not qualify for blanket relief.

Question No. 1: What are the participation options for a student-athlete who does not meet one or more of standards to qualify for blanket relief?

Answer: If a student-athlete does not meet one or more of the standards outlined in Question No. 2 of the Background section, the institution must submit a legislative relief waiver request into RSRO that includes, among other

documents, contemporaneous documentation that explains the student-athlete's deficiency.

Please note that if the only assertion made is that the student did not participate in athletics at their undergraduate institution, the waiver request will be denied.

Question No.2: When is the earliest date that a student-athlete who does not meet the blanket relief may submit a legislative relief waiver request?

Answer: For student-athletes who do not meet the blanket relief, requests may be submitted for processing within a window of the official break period before the student-athlete's final term before degree completion (e.g., the summer break when the student-athlete will graduate following the fall term, the winter break when the student-athlete will graduate following the spring term).

Question No. 3: In addition to the contemporaneous documentation that explains the student-athlete's deficiency, what other documents are required to submit a legislative relief waiver request of this type?

Answer: Please submit the following documents in RSRO along with the waiver request:

- A copy of student-athletes undergraduate transcript confirming (1) the degree conferral/graduation date; and (2) continual full-time enrollment;
- A copy of the student-athletes transfer tracer and/or record from the NCAA Transfer Portal to confirm that the student-athlete has at least one season of participation remaining, per Division III legislation;
- Confirmation that the student-athlete has been accepted into a graduate or postbaccalaureate program at your institution; and
- A case-specific Buckley form, signed by the student-athlete.

Note: incomplete or insufficient documentation may result in longer case processing times.