

Understanding NCAA[®] Academic Integrity Rules



ENFORCEMENT





Introduction

Academic integrity infractions are one of the more common types of violations in the NCAA. The rise in remote learning has only increased these violations.

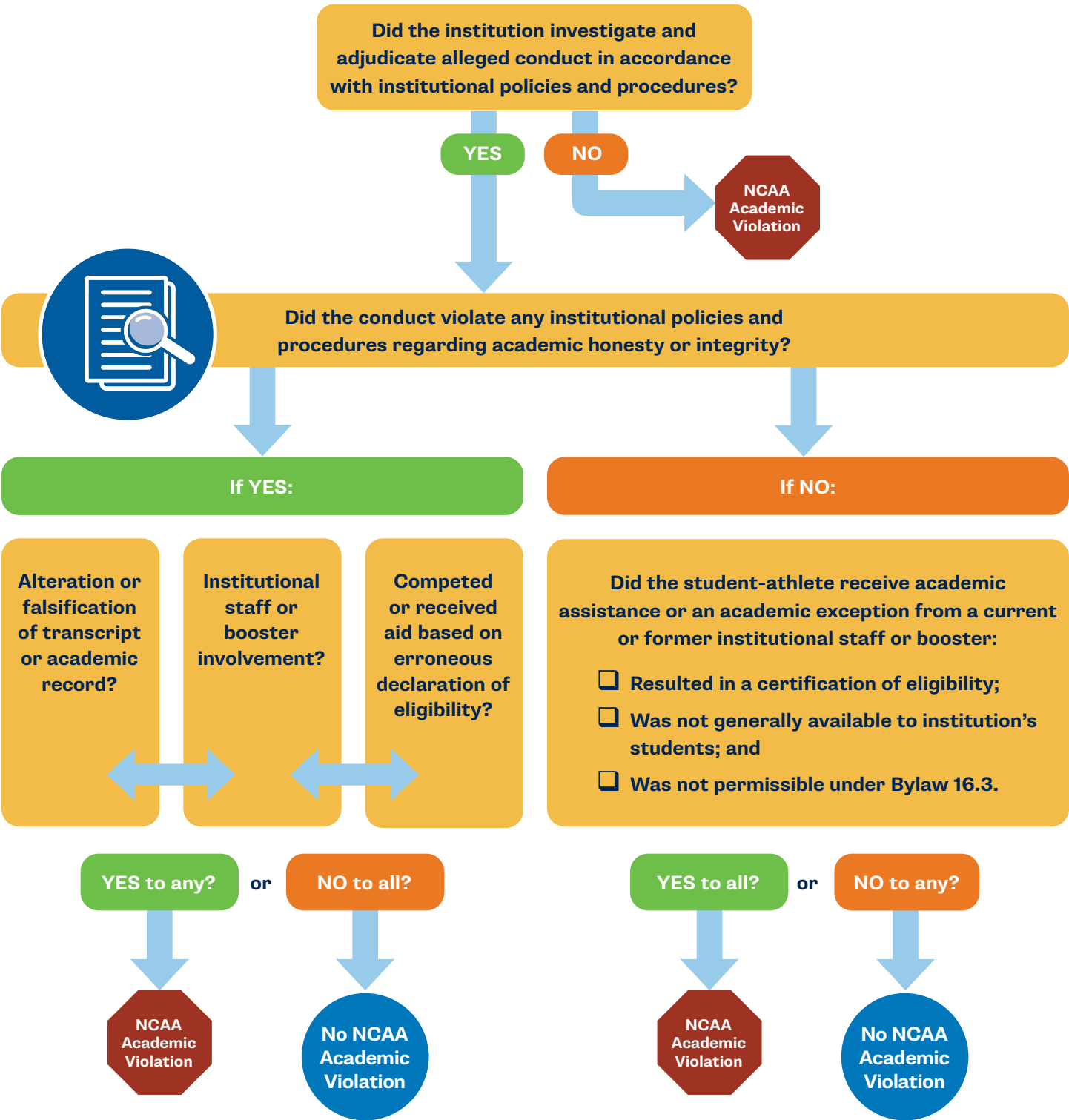
This guide is designed to help everyone who plays a role in ensuring integrity in the classroom, from athletics administrators and coaches to faculty athletics representatives, academic advisors and student-athletes.

NCAA academic integrity rules emphasize the importance of academic integrity policies at each member institution.

These policies are the starting point for any NCAA academic integrity analysis. It is important for all our member institutions to know their respective academic integrity policies and how students are adjudicated through those policies. Further, it is important for all student-athletes to understand what constitutes potential academic integrity issues and the ramifications of academic integrity violations on their NCAA eligibility and academic career. As new technology makes it easier for people to engage in academic integrity violations, it is more important than ever for our students to understand what qualifies as “cheating.”

Academic integrity cases involving student-athletes impact not only the student-athlete and athletics department, but can also harm the academic reputation of a school. Preventing academic integrity violations remains our best tool.

NCAA Academic Integrity Analysis





Athletics Directors

Athletics directors play an important role in promoting academic integrity in the athletics department. Here are some steps you can take to demonstrate both your and the athletics department's commitment to academic integrity:

- Regularly review your college or university's academic integrity policies, processes and procedures. Athletics directors should also review and be familiar with NCAA rules on academic integrity.
- Regularly review the athletics department budget for student-athlete academic success.
- Meet regularly with the senior athletics academic staff member.
- Meet at least once a year with the institution's president or chancellor to ensure understanding of the president's or chancellor's commitment to the academic success of student-athletes.
- Meet regularly with your faculty athletics representative regarding academic issues concerning student-athletes. FARs can help serve as liaisons between campus officials and athletics.
- Meet regularly with the athletics academic advising staff. These individuals can encounter academic integrity issues and must understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Meet at least annually with all head coaches and coaching staffs to communicate the expectations for compliance with the institution's academic integrity policies. Additionally, the athletics director should communicate that promoting compliance with the institution's academic integrity policies is part of each head coach's obligation under head coach responsibility legislation.
- Attend any academic integrity training with student-athletes and emphasize the importance of academic integrity.
- Educate boosters that they should not be involved in prospective or enrolled student-athletes' academics.



Athletics Academic Advisors

Often in a position to discover alleged academic integrity violations involving student-athletes or staff members, advisors have an important role to play. How do they report a student-athlete for alleged academic integrity violations while still maintaining a relationship with the student-athlete, the team and coaching staff?

- If possible, include policies in the student-athlete handbook that state academic advisors must report student-athletes for alleged academic integrity violations.
- Set up a protocol in which athletics academic advisors must take specific steps in such instances, with ultimate adjudication of the academic integrity occurring elsewhere.

When working with student-athletes, try to be aware of some common signs of possible academic misconduct:

- **Miraculous recoveries:** The student-athlete has consistently performed poorly in class, then scores extraordinarily well on subsequent assignments/tests. This is done without corresponding tutoring or other academic assistance.
- **Use of technology:** Be aware of the various applications, websites and forms of AI that students may use to complete coursework. Understand how your institution's academic integrity policy views their usage, and educate student-athletes on why using this technology may be considered cheating.
- **Friends of the program:** Campus individuals, such as professors or administrators, who are particularly close to a sport program and are interested in helping student-athletes. They take the assistance too far and engage in academic integrity violations.
- **Proctoring:** Student-athletes who are traveling take an exam on the road, and the proctor – usually an athletics department staff person – allows the student-athlete to use outside materials for the exam or, worse, helps the student-athlete complete the exam.

Faculty Athletics Representatives

Faculty athletics representatives are often the individuals on campus who discover or help work through alleged academic integrity issues involving a student-athlete. Faculty athletics representatives should be knowledgeable about both NCAA rules and the institution's academic integrity policies. Here are some ways you can help stress the importance of academic integrity in your role:

- Serve as an important go-between for campus and athletics. When academic integrity violations involving a student-athlete are suspected, faculty athletics representatives can serve a critical role in helping investigate and process these allegations. Many faculty members feel more comfortable contacting another faculty member when academic integrity violations are suspected.
- Encourage your athletics department to codify your role in academic integrity cases involving student-athletes.
- Work with department deans to discuss the importance of reporting academic integrity issues involving student-athletes to athletics because of the potential impact on eligibility.
- Keep the athletics director updated on the latest trends in academic integrity, particularly in the space of AI and the use of bots to complete homework. This allows athletics to monitor for their usage.
- Educate student-athletes on academic integrity. Students often do not fully understand what constitutes an academic integrity violation, especially when they use technology. Review with student-athletes the institution's policy on the permissible or impermissible uses of AI when completing coursework.

Coaches

The instructions for coaches are simple: Leave academics to the experts. Although you may be genuinely trying to help a student-athlete, sometimes a coach's motivations can be questioned or misunderstood. Here is how to handle some common scenarios involving coaches and academics:

- **Online coursework completed on or off campus:** If student-athletes or prospects are enrolled in online courses, remind them of the importance of performing the work themselves. Do not let student-athletes utilize your computer or computers in the sport program offices.
- **Use of technology or AI:** Do not direct student-athletes to online platforms that will “help” a student-athlete complete his or her homework. Many institutions prohibit the use of AI in academic coursework.
- **Applications, including entrance essays or statements:** Coaches should not write or provide essays, personal statements or resumes for prospective student-athletes or graduate transfers. Sport program staff (e.g., directors of operations) should also not complete or draft any part of a prospect's application.
- **High school transcript tampering that takes place on or off campus:** If a high school official is willing to make changes to a prospective student-athlete's academic record for them to gain eligibility, do not accept or encourage those changes. Report any impermissible grade changes to your compliance officer.
- **Friends of the program are people with a close relationship to a sports program (e.g., faculty, staff or teaching assistants):** While coaches can build relationships with faculty, do not ask about a student-athlete's academic performance or request a “favor” on behalf of a student-athlete.
- **Junior college transcript tampering:** Similar to high school transcript tampering, do not accept or encourage changes to a prospective junior college transfer's academic record.
- **Coaches doing or providing work:** A coach or a member of their staff has no reason to perform academic work for a student-athlete.
- **Protocol to report integrity issues:** If you suspect that one of your student-athletes is engaging in academic integrity violations, follow your school's protocol for reporting these types of violations.





Student-Athletes

Academic integrity issues come in many forms. Student-athletes should review their college or university's academic integrity policies or ask an academic counselor for guidance. Some examples of academic integrity issues may include plagiarism, cheating on a test or assignment, or having someone else complete your assignment. Also, understand how your academic integrity policy views the use of AI or bots. Just because you can find it online, it does not mean you can use it!

Frequently Asked Questions by Student-Athletes

Who monitors and investigates academic integrity?

- **Your college or university:** The school has its own process for investigating and assigning penalties for academic integrity issues.
- **The NCAA:** If an academic integrity issue involves certain factors, it could become an NCAA violation and there could be additional penalties that affect you.

What happens to you if you have been found to have committed an academic integrity violation?

- **Your college or university:** The school has its own process to be followed and penalties that it will assess on you. Look at your institution's academic integrity policies online or ask your academic advisor to help explain the policies and penalties to you.
- **The NCAA:** In some cases when the academic integrity issue also is an NCAA violation, you will

have to go through student-athlete reinstatement. This is the process that may reinstate your eligibility for competition. The withholding penalty starts with permanent ineligibility.

- There are possible long-term consequences outside of your ability to compete in your sport.
 - Professional sports (NFL/NBA/MLB/WNBA, etc.) look at your academic history.
 - Graduate schools may have a condition in which you cannot be admitted with an academic integrity charge on your transcript.
 - Employers may hesitate to hire you if they see you have committed academic integrity violations.

What should you do if someone asks you to cheat, offers to do your work for you or engages in any other academic integrity issues?

- Report the incident to the appropriate individual according to your college or university's policies.

Need Further Guidance or Have Additional Questions?

Visit the academic integrity website:

Promoting and Protecting Academic Integrity
ncaa.org/promoting-and-protecting-academic-integrity

Contact an enforcement employee:

Kathy Sulentic
ksulentic@ncaa.org
317-917-6274

For more information, visit:
ncaa.org



