



October 2023 NCAA Division I Council-Governance Legislative Cycle
Question and Answer Document
NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision Financial Expectations and Membership Requirements

This document contains questions and answers designed to assist the NCAA membership in its understanding of NCAA Division I Proposals No. 2023-40 and 2023-41, which increase the reclassification fee for institutions seeking to reclassify from NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) to Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and establish increased minimum financial aid requirements in FBS.

NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2023-40 – FCS to FBS Reclassification Fee.

Question No. 1: What is the purpose of increasing the reclassification fee for an FCS institution that intends to petition for reclassification to the FBS?

Answer: Currently, the fee to reclassify from FCS to FBS is \$5,000, while the reclassification fee for a Division II or Division III institution applying for reclassification to Division I is approximately \$1.8 million. FBS institutions are expected to make a significant investment in the student-athlete experience, which includes increased sport sponsorship minimums and financial aid requirements. Therefore, an institution applying to join FBS should be expected demonstrate that it has the resources available to cover a membership entrance fee that is of greater value than the fee to join Division I.

Question No. 2: Why is the recommendation to increase the reclassification fee for an FCS institution applying for reclassification to FBS not directly correlated to the value of being a member of FBS specifically?

Answer: The intent of the proposal is to promote the continued health and stability of both FCS and FBS by establishing a meaningful distinction between the two subdivisions. The fee is based on the anticipated NCAA revenue distribution benefits and costs associated with supporting FBS football and represents the difference between the average of FBS grant-in-aid and FCS grant-in-aid revenue distribution benefits aggregated over ten years.

Question No. 3: When is the application fee due?

Answer: The application fee is due in full, along with the completed application, by the annual June 1 deadline.

Question No. 4: How does the effective date of the proposal impact schools that have already begun the process of reclassifying from FCS to FBS?

Answer: Schools that have already begun the process of reclassifying to FBS, including those that applied by the June 1, 2023, deadline, will pay the current \$5,000 reclassification fee. If the proposal is adopted, any institution that applies moving forward will be subject to the increased fee.

NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2023-41 – FBS Financial Aid Requirements.

Question No. 5: What elements of financial aid (e.g., tuition, room, board) are included in a full grant-in-aid for purposes of calculating the financial aid requirements of FBS membership?

Answer: This proposal does not alter the application of Bylaw 20.02.10, which provides that for purposes of Bylaw 20, a full grant is the value of tuition and fees, living expenses, and required course-related books. As a result, if adopted, only those elements of financial aid would count towards the proposed annual minimum expenditure of \$6 million on grants-in-aid to student-athletes in athletics programs. Further, the equivalency computation associated with the average of 90% of permissible maximum number of overall grants-in-aid shall be based on the value of tuition and fees, living expenses, and required course-related books only.

Question No. 6: When is aid considered to be awarded for the purpose of awarding 90 percent of the total maximum number of overall grants-in-aid in sports used toward sport sponsorship requirements, awarding 210 grants-in-aid annually and awarding at least \$6 million annually on grants-in-aid?

Answer: Valid, signed financial aid agreements may be considered awarded. In satisfying the FBS membership requirements, an institution is not permitted to count financial aid agreements in any one sport that exceeds the permissible number of grants-in-aid permitted in that sport (See Bylaw 15.5).

Question No. 7: What types of financial aid may be counted towards the requirement that an FBS institution must annually offer a minimum of 210 athletics grants-in-aid and expend at least \$6 million on grants-in-aid to student-athletes?

Answer: The institution shall count only athletically related financial aid awarded to counters.

Question No. 8: What types of financial aid may be counted towards the requirement that an FBS institution award at least 90 percent of the total maximum number of overall grants-in-aid over a two-year period in sports counted toward meeting the sport sponsorship requirements?

Answer: The institution shall count only athletically related financial aid awarded to counters.

Question No. 9: How does an institution calculate whether the institution is providing 90 percent of the total maximum allowable grants-in-aid in sports used for sport sponsorship requirements?

Answer: An FBS institution shall sponsor a minimum of 16 varsity intercollegiate sports, including football, including a minimum of six men's or mixed teams, and a minimum of eight women's teams (of which a maximum of two emerging sports may be used). The chart below illustrates three scenarios regarding the provision of grants-in-aid over a rolling two-year period.

- **Institution A** is meeting the new FBS membership requirements because the institution provides 90 percent of the maximum allowable grants-in-aid in each sponsored sport.

- **Institution B** is meeting the new FBS membership requirements since the 16 sports counted toward sport sponsorship requirements are provided 90 percent of the total maximum allowable grants-in-aid in aggregate even though eight sports are not provided 90 percent of the maximum allowable grants-in-aid in that sport.
- **Institution C** is NOT meeting the new FBS membership requirements even though only four sports are not provided 90 percent of the maximum allowable grants-in-aid in that sport because the institution is not providing a total of 90 percent of the total allowable grants-in-aid across the 16 sports counted towards sport sponsorship.

Grants-in-Aid for Sports Used Toward Sport Sponsorship Requirements					
Sport	Two-Year Annual Team Limit	Institution A	Institution B		Institution C
Baseball	23.4	21	23		23.4
Men's Basketball	26	24	26		26
Women's Basketball	30	27	30		30
Women's Beach Volleyball	12	11	10		12
Football	170	153	170		170
Men's Golf	9	8	6		0
Women's Golf	12	11	12		0
Women's Gymnastics	24	22	24		24
Women's Rowing	40	36	24		10
Men's Soccer	19.8	18	16		0
Women's Soccer	28	25	24		28
Softball	24	22	24		24
Women's Swimming & Diving	28	25	16		28
Men's Tennis	9	8	6		9
Women's Tennis	16	14	12		16
Women's Volleyball	24	22	24		24
Total Available Grants-in-Aid	495.2	447 (90%)	447 (90%)	424.4 (86%)	

Question No. 10: May an FBS institution sponsor a sport at the varsity level if the institution does not award at least 90 percent of the permissible maximum number of overall grants-in-aid over a two-year period?

Answer: Yes. However, the institution must ensure that sports counted towards meeting sport sponsorship requirements are provided at least 90 percent of the total maximum allowable grants-in-aid over a two-year period.

Question No. 11: How should an institution count the financial aid awarded to a multisport student-athlete?

Answer: Financial aid awarded to multisport student-athletes used to meet FBS membership requirements shall be counted pursuant to Bylaw 15.5.9.

Question No. 12: For the 90-percent financial aid requirement, how does the effective date apply since FBS schools must meet the minimum over a two-year rolling period?

Answer: The proposal's effective date of August 1, 2027, falls after the due date for sports sponsorship for the 2026-27 academic year. Therefore, FBS institutions would need to report on their 2027-28 sports sponsorship forms (due by July 25, 2028) that they met the 90-percent minimum financial aid requirement for the two-year rolling period covering 2026-27 and 2027-28. As a result, schools would need to begin awarding at the 90-percent threshold during the 2026-27 academic year.

Question No. 13: For the requirement that FBS institutions award \$6 million in aid and 210 equivalencies, how does the August 1, 2027, effective date apply?

Answer: The first time current FBS institutions would be required to report meeting the new minimums would be at the end of the 2027-28 academic year (due by July 25, 2028). As a result, schools would need to award a minimum of 210 athletics grants-in-aid and expend at least \$6 million on grants-in-aid to student-athletes during the 2027-28 academic year.