

## **NCAA Division I Membership – Frequently Asked Questions**

*This document should be used as a quick reference for NCAA legislation involving reclassification to, or initial application for, NCAA Division I membership. The information below does not capture the full scope of all legislation that may apply to a multidivision, reclassifying or provisional member of Division I. As such, users are encouraged to review the full bylaw in the NCAA Division I Manual. Because of the dynamic nature of the NCAA legislative process, the most current information on these and any new legislation should be obtained through the institution's athletics department compliance staff or by contacting NCAA membership services at 317/917-6003.*

### ***RECLASSIFYING QUESTIONS***

**Q: When does a reclassifying institution that joins a new conference become eligible for that conference's automatic bid to a particular championship?**

**A:** In all sports, any new member added to a member conference that satisfies the continuity of membership requirements shall be immediately eligible to represent the conference as the automatic qualifier. Therefore, a reclassifying institution that joins an established conference (i.e., one that currently qualifies for an AQ bid) is eligible for automatic qualification on completion of the reclassifying process.

**Q: May a reclassifying institution simultaneously pursue multidivision status for one men's and one women's sport?**

**A:** Yes. At its July 2004 meeting, the subcommittee agreed that reclassifying institutions may seek multidivision status in one men's and one women's sport (other than football and basketball) while the remainder of the program proceeds through the reclassifying process. Selecting such an option would permit student-athletes in the two designated sports to be eligible for Division I championships within two years of the institution seeking Division I status in those sports.

**Q: When does a reclassifying institution count as a Division I opponent?**

**A:** Institutions that are reclassifying from NCAA Division II to Division I must comply with the scheduling requirements during the second year of reclassification (excluding the exploratory year). The Division I membership approved legislation to permit Division I members to count reclassifying institutions as Division I opponents, for the purpose of meeting Division I membership requirements, during the year in which the reclassifying opponent is required to meet the scheduling requirements (year two). For Ratings Percentage Index (RPI) purposes, a reclassifying institution could be counted in the Division I RPI in the applicable sport during its first year of reclassification if it can meet the Division I scheduling requirements in that sport. The institution must notify the applicable Division I sports committee that it will be satisfying those

requirements prior to the season by sending in a copy of its final schedule by September 15 of the year in which it wishes to be included in the Division I RPI.

**Q: During the exploratory year, what Division I requirements must be met?**

**A:** During the exploratory year, reclassifying and provisional member institutions are required to meet minimum sports sponsorship and financial aid requirements.

**Q: During the second year of reclassification when the Division I scheduling requirements must be met, may reclassifying institutions count each other or provisional members in meeting the minimum scheduling requirements for Division I membership?**

**A:** Yes, if both reclassifying institutions are in the second year of reclassification (excluding the exploratory year), they may count games against each other in meeting the scheduling requirements for Division I membership.

**Q: Are institutions reclassifying from Division II to Division I eligible for championships in either division during the reclassification process?**

**A:** During the exploratory year, Division II institutions remain eligible for Division II championships; however, beginning in year one of the membership process, reclassifying institutions are no longer eligible for Division II championships, and are not eligible for Division I championships until they become active Division I members. (Note: Reclassifying institutions are required to meet minimum sport sponsorship and financial aid requirements during the exploratory year of the process. It may be possible for an institution to exceed Division II maximum financial aid limits in an effort to meet Division I minimum financial aid requirements, thus rendering the institution ineligible for Division II championships.)

**Q: Are institutions reclassifying from Division II to Division I eligible to vote as a Division II member at the annual NCAA Convention?**

**A:** Division II institutions remain eligible to vote as a Division II member at the annual NCAA Convention until they become active Division I members.

**Q: When does the eligibility for a Division II institution to receive NCAA Enhancement Funds terminate if that institution is reclassifying to Division I?**

**A:** A member of Division II that has forwarded to the national office written notice of its intention to change its membership classification to Division I Bylaw 20.5.2.1 no longer shall be eligible to participate in any future Division II NCAA championship and no longer shall be eligible to receive Division II Enhancement Fund proceeds.

**Q: May an institution reclassify from NCAA Division III to Division I?**

**A:** No. Current rules would require a Division III institution to initially reclassify to Division II prior to reclassifying to Division I.

**Q: May a reclassifying Division II institution move directly to NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) or does that institution need to qualify as a NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA) member first?**

**A:** Yes. A reclassifying Division II institution may petition for Football Bowl Subdivision membership directly; however, it would need to fulfill all of the Football Bowl Subdivision membership requirements to qualify as an active member of that subdivision.

**Q: When are reclassifying institutions able to access the Legislative Services Database for the Internet (LSDBi) and the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse database in order to fulfill compliance functions on campus?**

**A:** That information may be accessed once the national office receives the reclassifying member application and applicable fee for membership. The institution may contact membership services at the national office for information on LSDBi and may contact the clearinghouse's institutional line to set up access to its information.

**Q: What is the deadline for an institution to make a final decision regarding whether to reclassify to Division I membership?**

**A:** An institution must submit a formal application and fee by June 1 prior to the exploratory year. Following completion of the exploratory year an institution must submit to the national office confirmation of its intent to reclassify by June 1; however, an institution may elect not to continue to pursue reclassification at any time during the process. If an institution elects to withdraw its petition for Division I membership, it will receive a prorated refund of its initial application fee.

**Q: May a reclassifying institution choose to apply Division I bylaws earlier than required by the legislation?**

**A:** Yes. Division II institutions should note that pursuant to an official interpretation [Reference: 4/11/00, Item No. 2], a Division II institution could apply Division I playing and practice season and financial aid rules during the reclassification process without jeopardizing its Division II status.

**Q: May a Division II institution reclassifying to Division I count for purposes of Division II conference sports-sponsorship requirements or the Division II sports-revenue distribution formula during the Division I membership reclassification period?**

**A:** No, not after the exploratory year. [Reference: Division II official interpretation 7/23/02, Item No. 2]

**Q: When does a Division II institution's eligibility for committee service terminate if that institution is reclassifying to Division I?**

**A:** Eligibility for committee service terminates once the exploratory period ends and year one of the reclassification process has officially begun (i.e., submission of the Division I skeletal strategic plan).

**Q: Do coaches at an institution that is in year one of the reclassification process to Division I need to pass both the Divisions I and II coaches recruiting exams?**

**A:** In this instance, coaches need to be certified using the Division I coaches recruiting exam. Keep in mind that reclassifying institutions are no longer eligible for Division II championships during the four-year period after the exploratory year. Therefore, coaches should be using the Division I test only (and not both).

**Q: Is a reclassifying institution eligible to compete in the National Collegiate Championship in a particular sport?**

**A:** Yes, a reclassifying institution is eligible to compete in the National Collegiate Championship in a particular sport. In year one, reclassifying institutions are required to apply all Division I legislation except scheduling requirements and continuing eligibility requirements for student-athletes completing their final season of competition and were enrolled at the institution at least one year prior to the institution's petition for exploratory membership. Thereafter, reclassifying

institutions must satisfy all Division I legislation. Such an institution normally is required to meet only the institutional and individual eligibility requirements of its division that govern the sport in question. In this example, a reclassifying institution is required to be satisfying all Division I legislation in year two.

Please note, however, in those sports in which two-thirds or more of the institutions sponsoring the sport are members of the same division, an institution participating in the championship is required to meet that division's institutional and individual eligibility requirements and the Division I requirements (or the more stringent rule if both divisions' rules address the same issue).

**Q: During the reclassifying process, to whom does the institution report violations of Division I rules?**

**A:** Reclassifying and provisional member institutions must self-report violations of NCAA Division I legislation through the NCAA enforcement and student-athlete reinstatement processes. Further, institutions shall report all violations to the NCAA Division I Management Council Membership Subcommittee as part of the required annual report.

**Q: What if an institution is projected to fail to meet all Division I requirements during the first year of active membership?**

**A:** The Division I Management Council Membership Subcommittee reserves the right to withhold progression of reclassifying (including multidivisional) and provisional institutions based on projected failure to meet any of the Division I membership requirements.

### ***PROVISIONAL QUESTIONS***

**Q: When must a provisional member be in full compliance with Division I legislation?**

**A:** A provisional member must be in full compliance with Division I rules beginning with the second year of the provisional member process.

**Q: May provisional members use the registered marks of the Association (i.e., the Association's name, logo or other insignia)?**

**A:** Yes, in accordance with guidelines established by the NCAA Executive Committee (see NCAA Constitution 3.6.2.2), provisional members may use the registered marks of the Association.

**Q: May a provisional institution move directly to Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) or does that institution need to qualify as a NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA) member first?**

**A:** A provisional institution may petition for Football Bowl Subdivision membership directly; however, it would need to fulfill all of the Football Bowl Subdivision membership requirements to qualify as an active member of that subdivision.

**Q: When are provisional institutions able to access the LSDBi and the clearinghouse database in order to fulfill compliance functions on campus?**

**A:** That information may be accessed once the national office receives the provisional member application and applicable fee for membership. The institution may contact membership services at the national office for information on LSDBi and may contact the clearinghouse's institutional line to set up access to its information.

**Q: What is the deadline for an institution to make a final decision regarding whether to apply for Division I membership?**

**A:** An institution must submit a formal application and fee by June 1 prior to the exploratory year. Following completion of the exploratory year, an institution must submit to the national office confirmation of its intent to reclassify by June 1; however, an institution may elect not to continue to pursue application at any time during the process. If an institution elects to withdraw its petition for Division I membership, it will receive a prorated refund of its initial application fee.

**Q: During the exploratory year, what Division I requirements must be met?**

**A:** During the exploratory year, reclassifying and provisional members are required to meet minimum sports sponsorship and financial aid requirements.

**Q: May provisional members compete against other provisional and reclassifying members and count them as Division I opponents?**

**A:** Yes, provided both opponents are complying with Division I membership requirements (NCAA Proposal No. 2002-91).

**Q: When is a provisional institution eligible for revenue distribution benefits available to other Division I members?**

**A:** Once a reclassifying or provisional institution is elected to active Division I membership, the institution becomes eligible for revenue distribution benefits.

**Q: When does a provisional institution that joins a new conference become eligible for that conference's automatic bid to a particular championship?**

**A:** General requirements for automatic qualification can be found in Bylaw 31.3.4.1.

In all sports, any new member added to a member conference that satisfies the continuity of membership requirements shall be immediately eligible to represent the conference as the automatic qualifier. Therefore, a provisional institution that joins an established conference (i.e., one that currently qualifies for an automatic bid) is eligible for automatic qualification on completion of the provisional process.

**Q: May provisional members participate in the National Letter of Intent (NLI) program?**

**A:** No, provisional members may not participate in the NLI program. For more information, please visit the official Web site of the NLI at [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org).

**Q: During the reclassifying process, to whom does the institution report violations of Division I rules?**

**A:** Reclassifying and provisional member institutions must self-report violations of NCAA Division I legislation through the NCAA enforcement and student-athlete reinstatement processes. Further, institutions shall report all violations to the Division I Management Council Membership Subcommittee as part of the required annual report.

**Q: What if an institution is projected to fail to meet all Division I requirements during the first year of active membership?**

**A:** The Division I Management Council Membership Subcommittee reserves the right to withhold progression of reclassifying (including multidivisional) and provisional institutions based on projected failure to meet any of the Division I membership requirements.

### ***MULTIDIVISION QUESTIONS***

**Q: Must an institution seeking Division I multidivision status for a particular sport apply the Division I rules in year one of the reclassification process?**

**A:** Pursuant to Division I Bylaw 20.4.2.2, an institution seeking Division I multidivision status for a particular sport must apply all Division I bylaws for that sport starting in year one of the two-year reclassification process. Further, as specified in an official interpretation [Reference: 3/25/93], student-athletes who transfer midyear in the spring prior to an institution's first year of the reclassification process must be recertified under Division I rules in the summer immediately before the institution enters year one of the reclassification process.

**Q: During the multidivisional reclassifying process, to whom does the institution report violations of Division I rules?**

**A:** Reclassifying and provisional member institutions must self-report violations of NCAA Division I legislation through the NCAA enforcement and student-athlete reinstatement processes. Further, institutions shall report all violations to the Division I Management Council Membership Subcommittee as part of the required annual report.

**Q: What if an institution is projected to fail to meet all Division I requirements during the first year of active membership?**

**A:** The Division I Management Council Membership Subcommittee reserves the right to withhold progression of reclassifying (including multidivisional) and provisional institutions based on projected failure to meet any of the Division I membership requirements.

**Q: If an institution is reclassifying its football program from the Football Championship Subdivision to the Football Bowl Subdivision, is the institution permitted to schedule a 12th game during the two-year reclassification process pursuant to Football Bowl Subdivision maximum contest limitations?**

**A:** Yes. In addition, the institution may apply all Football Bowl Subdivision legislation (e.g., maximum financial aid limits, maximum contest limit) during the reclassification compliance period. [2/21/07 Official Interpretation]