
N**ote to the reader...**

The NCAA Athletics Certification Handbook is designed to assist participating NCAA member institutions participating in the Division I athletics certification program, as well as members of peer-review teams that will be conducting campus evaluation visits. The handbook was developed by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification.

The handbook has been organized in a format that permits easy access for individuals with only modest familiarity concerning athletics certification. It is not meant to answer every question related to athletics certification; rather, it provides a foundation on which to increase understanding of the self-study process.

The handbook follows a sequential order that conforms to the sequence of events related to athletics certification and describes the responsibilities and activities of the institution, the peer-review team and the Committee on Athletics Certification. Throughout the handbook, external peer reviewers are referred to as "the peer-review team." When referring to the Committee on Athletics Certification, the handbook uses either the formal title or refers only to "the committee."

To ensure that the handbook is a useful and up-to-date resource guide, the NCAA revises it annually and distributes it each year to institutions and peer reviewers involved in the certification process for the upcoming academic year.

We hope that the handbook is useful and that it contributes to the successful completion of campus self-studies and to the fair evaluation of those self-study efforts by members of peer-review teams.

Users of the handbook are encouraged to submit questions or suggestions regarding the use of the publication to:

NCAA Membership Services
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Information regarding the athletics certification program can be obtained via the Internet at www.ncaa.org.

NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON
ATHLETICS CERTIFICATION

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1 INTRODUCTION

The NCAA and its legislative process...

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a voluntary organization devoted to the sound administration of intercollegiate athletics. The Association's active members are separated into three membership divisions. Member institutions choose their membership division based upon the relative emphasis and support they wish to devote to athletics within the academic context.

NCAA members regulate their athletics programs through cabinets and committees. These groups, made up of campus and conference representatives, may suggest changes in NCAA rules, but the full membership has the final authority. In Division I, that authority is exercised initially through a representative governance structure, consisting of a Management Council (athletics administrators and faculty members) and a Board of Directors (campus chief executive officers). The members of those bodies are selected by the conferences they represent. The Division I institutions can call for an override vote, in which all schools and conferences participate, on any legislative action taken by the Management Council and/or Board.

Origins and history of athletics certification...

Athletics certification was approved for Division I institutions at the 1993 Convention as a key part of the NCAA's reform agenda. Certification was originally introduced in 1989 and tested in a two-year pilot program. Participants generally agreed that the pilot program was valuable but could be improved by limiting the scope of the self-study. After a special committee reworked the idea over the next year, the NCAA Presidents Commission, the NCAA Council and the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics supported a revised version of the program.

Athletics certification began its second cycle in 1999. Since 1999, the program has been reviewed annually and in 2004 the Board of Directors supported a revised version of certification that reduced the number of operating principles to eight.

The program's purpose...

Athletics certification is meant to ensure the NCAA's fundamental commitment to integrity in intercollegiate athletics.

The program is structured to achieve its goal in several ways:

1. By opening the affairs of athletics to the university community and the public.

- Key campus constituent groups must be meaningfully involved in the institution's self-study.
- Self-study reports are evaluated by teams of peer reviewers from other institutions and conference offices.
- Decisions of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification related to an institution's status are announced publicly.

2. **By setting standards (called operating principles) for the operation of Division I athletics programs.** These operating principles originally were adopted overwhelmingly at the 1993 Convention. They cover three basic areas—governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity, equity and student-athlete welfare. In preparation for the second cycle of the athletics certification program, the operating principles in each of the areas were reworked and revised as necessary to complement and supplement information obtained by institutions during their first cycle self-studies. Following revision by the Division I membership, these changes were approved in 1998 and further revised in 2004 by the Division I Management Council and Board of Directors. The operating principles are included as a part of the athletics certification self-study instrument and appear in Bylaw 22 of the NCAA Division I Manual.
3. **By putting tough sanctions in place for institutions that fail to conduct a comprehensive self-study or to correct problems.** Athletics certification is intended to help an institution. For this reason, the program allows ample time for an institution to consider its programs, to identify problems and to correct them. Institutions that fail to make an honest effort face serious consequences: ineligibility for NCAA championships and, eventually, removal from active membership in the Association.

Benefits of self-study...

The core of athletics certification is the institution's self-study, in which campus-wide participation is critical.

An effective self-study benefits the institution by providing:

1. **Self-awareness.** The self-study offers a unique opportunity to educate individuals across the campus about the athletics program's goals and purposes, the many challenges facing athletics and the ways in which athletics supports the institution's mission.
2. **Affirmation.** Athletics certification is couched in the affirmative—its aim, after all, is to certify—and the self-study process will reveal many aspects of the athletics program worthy of praise.
3. **Opportunities to improve.** Even an outstanding program can be better, and problems will be identified routinely as part of any institution's self-study. As these problems come to light, the self-study process will offer a forum for suggestions from individuals with a wide range of experience.

There are benefits for the Association, as well:

1. The self-study provides a framework for the Division I membership to show its continuing commitment to institutional control of intercollegiate athletics within the academic setting.
2. Increased public confidence.
3. The athletics certification program serves as a means to ensure that all Division I member institutions are meeting the operating principles adopted by the membership.

During the second cycle, institutions will be asked to report specifically on the opportunities that were provided to various individuals or groups in the broad-campus community to:

- a) Offer input into the self-study report before findings and plans for improvement were formulated.
- b) Review the self-study report after it was drafted.

C**ommittee on Athletics Certification...**

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification is responsible for the administration of the athletics certification program. All members are employed at Division I institutions or conferences, and they include college presidents, athletics administrators, faculty athletics representatives and conference administrators. The committee initially reviews the self-study reports of institutions to identify issues, receives the written evaluations of peer-review teams and the institution's response, which become the basis for determining the certification status for each Division I member institution.

P**hilosophy statement of the Committee on Athletics Certification...**

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification is charged by the Division I membership to assist institutions in identifying mechanisms to ensure intercollegiate athletics programs are operating to their fullest potential. The committee and a team of an institution's peers will provide an objective evaluation of the institution's athletics program based on operating principles adopted by the membership. The certification program is designed to help an institution improve. The committee will allow ample time for an institution to consider its program, identify deficiencies and take steps to correct them. However, if an institution does not make a good faith effort to conduct an honest, straightforward, accurate self-study or the self-study reveals deficiencies in the intercollegiate athletics program, the committee will require the institution to take appropriate corrective actions. The committee will monitor the effectiveness of the certification program to ensure the NCAA's fundamental commitment to integrity in intercollegiate athletics is supported through the committee's actions and that the program continues to emphasize applicable principles of the Association.

E**xternal peer-review teams...**

External peer-review teams, selected and assigned by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, are composed of experienced educational and athletics personnel.

Peer-review teams are responsible for:

- Verifying that the institution's self-study was accurate and complete.
- Confirming that the self-study was developed through a broad-based process that involved campus-wide participation.
- Evaluating the self-study and committee-identified issues in terms of the operating principles that have been approved for all Division I members.

A typical peer-review team will consist of a maximum of four members. Whenever possible, a chief executive officer will serve as chair. Each peer-review team member will receive training, with special emphasis on training for peer-review team chairs.

P**lacement in the pool of peer reviewers...**

To be considered for placement in the pool of peer reviewers, an individual must:

- Be currently employed at a Division I institution or conference office. (Note: An individual who has retired will be considered for selection for up to five years after retirement and can be considered for a longer period if he or she demonstrates continued active involvement in intercollegiate athletics.)
- Have a substantial knowledge of intercollegiate athletics as evidenced by employment and service history.

The individual also must:

- Hold the position of chief executive officer, faculty athletics representative, director of athletics or senior woman administrator at a member institution, or
- Have recognized expertise, skills or experience in at least one of the four areas addressed in the certification program (i.e., expertise in all operating principles related to that area).

In addition to these basic criteria, the Committee on Athletics Certification has established additional guidelines for its selection of peer reviewers:

- An individual should have five years of campus experience as a full-time employee, including three in Division I. A conference administrator may be selected, provided the individual has at least three years of conference office experience.
- An individual employed outside an institution's athletics department should have a direct working relationship with athletics.
- An individual will not be considered for selection if that individual has been found by the NCAA Committee on Infractions to have committed a major violation of NCAA rules in the last five years.

The Committee on Athletics Certification uses a variety of specific criteria not outlined here in selecting peer reviewers. Those criteria are documented and available from the national office and are subject to periodic revision.

The certification committee will, on an ongoing basis, apply thorough evaluation to peer reviewers, including chairs, through NCAA staff evaluation of individuals and evaluation of each peer reviewer by his or her fellow team members.

T**he certification cycle...**

The initial certification cycle required each Division I institution to complete a self-study of athletics in the first five years of the program. The Division I membership voted at the 1997 Convention to change the frequency of athletics certification from once every five years to once every 10 years. For the second cycle of the certification program:

- An institution's placement in the initial athletics certification cycle has been taken into consideration for its placement in the second cycle.

- Conferences have suggested a schedule for their member institutions.
- Institutions from the same conference have been evenly scheduled to reduce the burden on the conference office.
- Placement was in conjunction with the institution's regional accreditation, in so far as possible, for those institutions that so desired.
- Placement of institutions that postponed their certification activity in the initial cycle because of involvement with the Association's enforcement process are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- When the above issues are not operative, procedures of random selection are used.

2 ATTENTION TO SECOND-CYCLE ISSUES...

The NCAA Athletics Certification Handbook for the second cycle of the Division I athletics certification program incorporates a number of adjustments that have been made since institutions conducted their first-cycle self-studies. To help institutions in their identification and understanding of basic themes for the second cycle, the Committee on Athletics Certification cites the following:

- The evaluation criteria for the second cycle now includes an assessment of the progress that institutions have made since their first-cycle self-studies in each of the three certification areas: governance and commitment to rules compliance; academic integrity; and equity and student-athlete welfare. A school mainly will be evaluated on information from its second-cycle self-study. However, a school also will be evaluated on the basis of its implementation/progress on required actions from the certification committee's first-cycle decision and those plans for improvement adopted by the school in the first cycle that are directly related to the operating principles. Please note that an institution will not be required to fulfill an element of a first-cycle plan if the element does not affect the institution's conformity with an operating principle.
- The membership has made changes for the second cycle in response to evolving standards (e.g., through modifications in the operating principles and self-study items) in a number of the certification areas. These changes include the following:
 1. The Division I membership has adopted legislation requiring the enhancement of the operating principle for student-athlete welfare to include a focus on (1) the availability of established grievance or appeal procedures for student-athletes in appropriate areas, and (2) the provision of evidence that institutional programs are in place that protect the health of and provide a safe environment for student-athletes. These changes necessitated a modification in the title of the Commitment to Equity area to become the "Equity and Student-Athlete Welfare" area of study.
 2. The self-study questions related to Operating Principle 2.1 have been expanded to focus attention on (1) the academic profiles and graduation rates of student-athletes as a whole and for specific student-athlete subgroups, and (2) whether academic standards and policies applicable to student-athletes are consistent with those adopted by the institution for the student body in general or the NCAA's standards, whichever are higher.
 3. As a part of the committee's evaluation of the gender-issues and minority-issues areas, the committee will use, in its deliberations and in the training of peer reviewers, a checklist of Title IX areas/requirements and a similar document representing minority-issues areas

to determine whether an institution has (1) thoroughly studied itself in the areas and described how it studies each area, (2) compiled complete data demonstrating its current status/commitment, and (3) established a complete plan for making or maintaining progress with its gender-equity and minority-opportunities positions. (It is critical to note that the committee will not be evaluating, nor training peer reviewers to evaluate, whether an institution is in legal compliance with Title IX; rather, the committee and peer reviewers will be evaluating the institution in terms of substantial conformity with Operating Principle 3.1.)

4. In its efforts to streamline the program, the committee also has enhanced the self-study instrument by deleting charts and tables relating to gender issues from the Equity and Student-Athlete Welfare area, allowing institutions, peer-review teams and the committee to gather and review data previously offered by those charts through institutions' completion of Equity in Athletics Disclosure/NCAA Gender-Equity Survey reporting forms.
5. In further efforts to streamline the program, the committee recommended modifications and legislation reflecting the changes adopted by the Management Council and Board of Directors in January 2004. The program changes included the elimination of five operating principles that were covered either in other areas of athletics certification or by other NCAA legislation: Mission of the Athletics Program and the Institution; Financial Practices; Fiscal Management and Stability; Established Fiscal Policies and Procedures and Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct. Institutions will only need to respond to committee required actions or institutional plans that relate to currently legislated operating principles.
6. The Committee on Athletics Certification's developed "measurable standard" documents as a way to bring greater consistency to the athletics certification process. These documents are intended to clarify the expectations of the committee for each operating principle.
7. In effort to provide additional resources to the institution during the self-study process, a Web site devoted specifically to Division I athletics certification was created. This athletics certification Web page is accessible through the NCAA Web site at www.ncaa.org. The institution will be able to access information and documents related to the self-study process (e.g., orientation visit materials, measurable standards documents, requirements for institutional plans) via this Web page.
8. In order to increase efficiency, reduce costs and add greater consistency, the committee developed a Web-based software program for the submission and storage of institutional self-studies, committee identified issues, peer-review team reports and committee actions. The Athletics Certification System (ACS) is both ID and password protected.

The committee remains sensitive to the needs and desires of the membership and will continually monitor the certification program for its effectiveness and intended purpose—ensuring the NCAA's fundamental commitment to integrity in intercollegiate athletics.

 **Costs...**

The costs related to athletics certification will be shared by the NCAA, participating institutions and (on an optional basis) conferences.

An institution is responsible for:

1. All costs associated with the preparation and distribution of the self-study report.
2. Actual expenses of peer reviewers for campus visits, including transportation to the reviewer's local airport, local airport parking, round-trip air travel (i.e., coach class) or ground transportation, lodging, local transportation and per diem of \$40 per day.
3. Work-related needs (e.g., copiers, meeting rooms, computers, Internet access, printers) of the peer-review team and the NCAA staff member during the evaluation visit.

The NCAA is responsible for:

1. Expenses of NCAA staff members related to campus orientation and evaluation visits.
2. All costs associated with the preparation and distribution of the peer-review report after the evaluation visit.
3. Work-related needs of the committee.

Member conferences are responsible for:

- All costs incurred by a conference staff member related to that individual's participation in the certification of a conference member institution.

3 PREPARING FOR THE SELF-STUDY

The certification process allows the institution approximately six to eight months to conduct its self-study. An orientation conducted by a member of the NCAA staff signals the beginning of that self-study process.

Whenever possible, the NCAA staff member who conducts the orientation also will receive the institution's self-study report, make arrangements for the peer-review team's visit and accompany the peer-review team on that visit. The institution should consider that NCAA staff member a primary source of information and should feel free to contact that individual directly with questions. If the institution has questions before a specific staff liaison is assigned, the institution should contact the national office's membership services staff.

Responsibilities of the chief executive officer...

Throughout the self-study process, the chief executive officer must make it clear, by word and action, that the self-study is a priority and that the entire institution—not just the department of athletics—is responsible for its completion.

In preparing for the self-study, the chief executive officer's specific responsibilities include:

- 1. Appointing the chair of the self-study steering committee.** Neither the chief executive officer nor any person with direct oversight for athletics (e.g., the director of athletics, the vice-president to whom athletics reports) may chair the steering committee. The chair should be appointed from among the institution's senior-management team.

The chair should be provided clear authority from and ready access to the chief executive officer. By doing so, the chief executive officer communicates the importance that the institution attaches to the self-study and encourages other self-study participants to take the process seriously.

However, given the unique organizational structures and reporting lines at some institutions, each chief executive officer is permitted flexibility in appointing a chair. The institution must document that the chair has clear authority from and ready access to the chief executive officer in situations where the institution cannot state definitively that the chair is a member of the institution's senior-management team.

- 2. Selecting the members of the self-study steering committee.** The chief executive officer is responsible for ensuring effective representation of key campus constituent groups on the steering committee. The goal should be a balance between athletics department staff members and other key individuals and groups on campus.
- 3. Making the charge to the steering committee clear.**
- 4. Giving the steering committee the proper authority to complete its work.**

Forming the self-study steering committee...

Four positions on the steering committee must be filled by the:

- Chief executive officer.
- Faculty athletics representative.
- Director of athletics.
- Senior woman administrator.

The chief executive officer's involvement as a full-fledged member of the steering committee is critical to imbuing the process with the necessary authority and seriousness of purpose. The chief executive officer may designate an individual to replace him or her at steering committee meetings that the chief executive officer cannot attend.

The membership of the rest of the steering committee is left to the discretion of the chief executive officer. No other positions are mandatory, and the number of members will vary from campus to campus. Institutions with separate men's and women's athletics departments, for example, may find it necessary to make special provisions in their self-studies to allow for a proper evaluation of separate organizations or services, and the self-study steering committees of those institutions—and perhaps the peer-review teams that visit them—could be structured differently as a result.

In appointing steering committee members, the chief executive officer also may wish to consider the differing perspectives, range of expertise and access to information that may be offered by representatives of the following groups:

- Governing board.
- Administration external to athletics, including academic affairs, fiscal affairs, student affairs, admissions, registration and financial aid.
- Faculty.
- Student body.
- Alumni or representatives of the institution's athletics interests in good standing.

Involving the campus community...

The steering committee should establish as many subcommittees as it considers necessary to complete the major topic areas of the self-study. Subcommittees should be organized in ways that best suit the institution's needs and the requirements of the self-study. It is recommended that subcommittee membership be reflective of the broad constituent interests of the institution, including faculty, students and student-athletes.

Ordinarily, the chair of a subcommittee would be a member of the steering committee. Also, as a general rule, athletics department staff members would not serve as subcommittee chairs, although they normally would be included as subcommittee members.

In addition, some athletics department staff members (e.g., athletics academic advisor, compliance coordinator) might serve as *ex officio* members of subcommittees to make data collection and analysis easier.

Subcommittees are accountable to the steering committee and should be actively involved through regular communication, periodic meetings and timely reports.

Finally, the steering committee is required to identify methods (e.g., appointment to the steering committee or subcommittees, interviews, student-athlete forums, student-athlete advisory committee) of involving student-athletes in the self-study process.

P**reparing a tentative written plan for completing the self-study...**

The written plan should be concise. It must include:

- Stated goals for the process.
- Identification of all institutional plans from the first cycle self-study and all NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification required actions from the first cycle (i.e. conditions and/or strategies for improvement) and all NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification required actions from the institution's interim report (if applicable).
- The function (e.g., role in drafting report, developing plan for improvement) and composition of the steering committee and subcommittees, with the names and titles of steering committee and subcommittee chairs.
- The identification of the institution's campus liaison. This individual can be responsible for fielding questions from institutional personnel and forwarding them to the NCAA staff member, and is responsible for coordinating preparations for the evaluation visit, including lodging and travel for peer-review team members, scheduling interviews and organizing any work-related needs for peer reviewers (e.g., computer resources, meeting rooms).
- The identification of the individual(s) responsible for writing the self-study report.
- An outline and schedule for completing the self-study.
- Plans for involving the conference office or other individuals or agencies outside the institution. [Note: Outside involvement requires prior written approval of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification.]
- Institutional guidelines for writing and editing the self-study report. These should address the work-related needs of self-study participants (e.g., meeting rooms, computer resources, clerical assistance, copies).
- The process for reviewing subcommittee and steering committee draft reports.
- The process for developing the final self-study report, including evaluation of self-study responses against the operating principles and development of the institution's plans for improvement.
- Plans for communicating the work of the steering committee to the institutional community. Also, the institution should consider what plans, if any, it has for communicating the work of the steering committee to the electronic and print media and general public.

Before writing the plan, the steering committee should consult with the institution's governing board and its chief executive officer regarding plans and commitments that may seriously affect the future of the institution and its athletics program (e.g., composition of the student body, organization of the athletics program, sports sponsorship, physical plant, conference or NCAA divisional membership). A sample written plan should be submitted to the institution's NCAA staff liaison three to four weeks before the institution's orientation visit.

D**etermining the involvement of the conference office...**

Conference offices' involvement in athletics certification is optional, but is encouraged by the committee. The role of an institution's conference office is determined by the institution. (The institution should alert the NCAA staff member and the peer-review team before the evaluation visit of the conference office's chosen role in the visit.)

The conference office's role may include:

- Participating in the orientation process.
- Ensuring that the institution develops, implements and reports corrective actions identified as a normal part of the certification process.
- Serving as an ex officio member of the institution's steering committee.
- Participating in the introductory and exit meetings of the evaluation visit. (The conference representative involved in an evaluation visit will not be permitted to attend interviews or meetings of the peer-review team.)

If the regular, ongoing role of the conference office includes a review of the institution's rules-compliance efforts or help in developing and maintaining compliance initiatives, the institution should be prepared to provide a record of those efforts to the peer-review team, if requested.

Conference offices should treat institutional self-study reports as confidential. To the extent that conference personnel become aware of violations during the certification process, the conference is obligated to help ensure that conference members self-report those violations.

U**se of outside individuals or agencies...**

Some institutions may wish to involve individuals or agencies not otherwise employed by the institution in one or more aspects of the self-study process. The involvement of such individuals or agencies falls into two categories:

1. Some conference offices may choose not to perform the activities described in the previous section. An institution in such a conference (or an independent institution) may employ individuals from another conference office or elsewhere to carry out the specific responsibilities.
2. Institutions also may employ outside individuals or agencies to perform related functions that are different from the conference office responsibilities outlined above—for example, helping to organize an institution's self-study process. In such cases, the institution's personnel are responsible for generating the substance of the self-study report, and peer-review teams will be evaluating institutions on their roles in developing the content of self-study reports.

NCAA rules recognize the institution's responsibility not only for determining what role (if any) individuals outside the institution might play in the certification process, but also for ensuring that outside individuals or agencies are involved appropriately. In no way should the balance of responsibility for the self-study process shift from internal to external personnel.

In addition, before individuals or agencies outside the institution may be employed in relation to athletics certification, the institution must receive prior written approval of the Committee on Athletics

Certification. The institution's chief executive officer must request in writing from the committee approval for outside involvement, and the request should include a full explanation of the specific services that will be rendered.

Any anticipated involvement by outside individuals or agencies also must be clearly defined in the institution's written plan for completing the self-study process.



orientation...

An NCAA staff member will conduct the orientation for the institution approximately 10-12 months before the evaluation visit. The purpose of the orientation visit is to review:

1. The purpose and format of the certification program.
2. The institution's activities already conducted in preparation for the orientation visit.
3. The self-study instrument (with members of the steering committee, subcommittee, chairs and subcommittee members, if desired).
4. Preparations for the evaluation visit.
5. Projected dates for the evaluation visit.

The orientation is intended for the benefit of those campus members who will be involved in the self-study, and any steering committee or subcommittee member should feel free to ask about the self-study process or athletics certification in general.



getting ready for the orientation...

To prepare for the orientation, the institution (and the steering committee in particular) is expected to:

1. Review the certification handbook and the self-study instrument.
2. Prepare its tentative written plan for completing the self-study.
3. Determine the role of the conference office in the self-study and peer-review process.
4. Review institutional compliance policies and procedures.
5. Identify potential dates for the institution's evaluation visit.

M**odification of schedule...**

An institution may apply to the Committee on Athletics Certification for modification of its place in the schedule upon a showing of special need. The committee shall, at its discretion, revise the schedule if practicable, and use its authority to ensure that the self-studies do not extend beyond 10 years unless extenuating circumstances are present.

Once an institution begins its self-study, a request for modification to delay the process will be granted by the committee only in unusual circumstances that significantly affect the institution's ability to complete its self-study. The institution must make its request for any modification in writing from the institution's chief executive officer to the committee. When the committee approves modification of the schedule in such cases, the committee (or the chair) will determine whether more current data will have to be collected by an institution when it resumes the self-study.

For institutions that fail to submit an adequate self-study sufficiently in advance of a peer-review team's visit, a written request to delay the visit should be sent from the institution to the committee, which will deal with such requests on a case-by-case basis.

A Division I institution that receives a notice of allegations or inquiry from the NCAA enforcement staff will be asked to notify the chair of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification if the institution currently is engaged in the athletics certification process or is scheduled to begin the process in the near future. The certification process for that institution will be postponed until after the enforcement process has concluded and the Committee on Infractions has issued its public report.

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification will not render any decision regarding a particular institution's certification status until such time as matters related to possible rules violations at the institution are resolved.

For institutions pursuing an appeal of an infractions case or penalties, the chair of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (or the executive subcommittee, if the chair deems necessary) will determine on a case-by-case basis whether it is necessary to continue postponement of the certification committee's decision.

4 CONDUCTING THE SELF-STUDY

The athletics certification program allows each institution approximately six to eight months to conduct its self-study. During this period, an institution must gather and analyze data, and report the findings in a self-study report.



General responsibilities of the self-study steering committee...

Responsibilities of the steering committee during the actual period of self-study include:

1. Collecting and organizing pertinent data.

The institution should gather data by making use of the individuals best suited to the job. Staff members in the offices of admissions and registration, for example, will be able to report on the demographics, and the academic preparation and performance of the general student body. Similarly, athletics department staff members (e.g., compliance coordinators, academic advisors) may serve as key sources of information regarding student-athletes.

2. Coordinating activities of the subcommittees and monitoring progress of the self-study.

The steering committee is expected to help ensure that subcommittee and steering committee reports are developed with:

- Opportunities for input from appropriate campus constituent groups.
- Appropriate involvement of all members of the steering committee or of a given subcommittee in the preparation of particular reports.

3. Reviewing reports of the institution, the peer-review team and the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification in relation to the institution's previous self-study. This review will help the institution to judge its progress in addressing past problems. It also will assist the institution in preparing its response to specific requests of the second cycle self-study that reference first-cycle issues.

4. Reviewing the reports of the steering committee and the various subcommittees.

5. Maintaining a written record of:

- Dates on which subcommittee and steering committee meetings were conducted, and the individuals in attendance at those meetings.
- Individual(s) responsible for writing each section of the self-study report.
- Invitations extended to members of the subcommittees and steering committee to comment on subcommittee and steering committee draft reports, including the approximate dates on which those invitations were extended.

The peer-review team will consider these records as part of its evaluation of the institution's self-study process and the extent to which that process reflected campus-wide participation.

In their review of the institution's self-study process, peer-review teams and the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification will be guided more by the opportunities provided for comment and the quality of discussion than by the number of meetings.

6. Producing and publicizing the final self-study report.

Preparing the self-study report...

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification has established a specific format for organizing each institution's self-study report. Such standardization seems wise for the following reasons:

1. To make the institution's preparation of the report as straightforward as possible.
2. To avoid verbiage that is the result of doubts about what information actually is of interest to the committee.
3. To make the reports easier for the peer-review team and members of the committee to read and understand.
4. To ensure greater consistency in the material being reviewed, and thereby increase the chances for equitable treatment of participating institutions.

Athletics Certification System

The Division I Athletics Certification System is a Web based software program for the submission and storage of institutional self studies, committee identified issues, peer-review team reports, committee actions and committee precedent. The system will allow institutions, peer-review teams, the Committee on Athletics Certification and the NCAA staff to view an institution's self-study report via the Web. Institutions are required to submit their self study via the Web based system. However, institutions that do not have the capability to submit reports via the Web for various reasons (e.g., financial, computer availability) will have the opportunity to request from the Committee on Athletics Certification approval to submit a self-study report in the form of a printed hardcopy document. The institution's chief executive officer will be required to request in writing from the committee approval for written submission, and the request should include a full explanation of the specific reasons the institution is not able to submit its report via the Athletics Certification System.

A user manual for the Athletics Certification System may be found on the NCAA Web site at www.ncaa.org.

General considerations in preparing the report...

In general, the committee expects that the institution will:

- Assure that institutional responses address each aspect of all self-study items in a thorough but concise manner.
- Prepare responses to each specific self-study item so that they can be read individually, rather than as part of a general narrative.
- Provide supporting documentation only as necessary, with specific attention to materials noted in the self-study instrument.

Beyond the information requested in specific self-study items, the self-study instrument also refers to

documents or materials that are “to be available” to the peer-review team.

The notation “to be available” denotes that the material should remain on campus in its normal location, but the institution should be able to locate the information if it is requested by a peer-review team either before or during its campus visit. At various points, the self-study instrument specifies that three years of data be provided or be available. Where the self-study instrument does not require three years of data, one year should be satisfactory.

Specific expectations for the report...

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification will instruct peer-review teams, in reviewing an institution’s self-study report, to ensure that:

- The report’s conclusions are based on data or records that are available and reliable.
- The conclusions reached are reasonable based on the available data.
- All existing concerns have been identified by the institution and plans for improvement have been established to address those concerns.
- Where the institution has concluded that plans to correct problems in one area may affect existing programs in other areas, plans have been established to maintain the current level of quality of all programs.

The report’s organizational format...

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification expects that each institution’s self-study report will be organized in the same manner and follow the same order as the self-study instrument (e.g., introduction, responses to self-study items, evaluations and plans for improvement). This effort is made easy by following the Athletics Certification System.

The institution’s self-study report should be presented in three sections, consistent with the certification program’s three basic topic areas (e.g., academic integrity, equity and student-athlete welfare). The information in each section should be divided into parts:

1. The first part of each section provides an opportunity for the institution to report its progress since the first-cycle self-study.
2. The second part of each section is reserved for the institution’s responses to self-study items. Institutions are encouraged not to engage in any evaluation during this part of the self-study report.
3. The third part of each section is for: (a) The institution’s conclusions regarding conformity with each element of the operating principle and with the operating principle as a whole, and (b) statements of the institution’s plans for improvement, related to the operating principles, including:
 - Strategies for improving the quality of the athletics program.
 - Remedial or corrective actions for areas of concern identified by the institution.

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification has developed this three-part construction format to encourage institutions to keep their responses brief and to the point.

E**valuation of the Rules-Compliance Program...**

Operating Principle No. 1.3 (rules compliance) requires each Division I institution to have its rules-compliance program evaluated by an authority outside the athletics department at least once every four years. A qualified individual or organization that does not have day-to-day compliance responsibilities for the institution's athletics department and is knowledgeable in NCAA legislation and rules compliance practices must conduct this compliance review. The evaluation must consist of a review to determine that the compliance practices are engaged and functioning and must include, at a minimum, the following areas:

- Initial-eligibility certification.
- Continuing-eligibility certification.
- Transfer-eligibility certification.
- Financial aid administration including individual and team limits.
- Recruiting (e.g. official visits, etc.).
- Camps and clinics.
- Investigation and self-reporting of rules violations.
- Rules education.
- Extra benefits (compliance with Bylaw 16, e.g., per diem, student host reimbursement, equipment retrieval, etc.).
- Playing and practice season (compliance with Bylaw 17, e.g., out-of-season activities, voluntary activities, hours per week during season, etc.).
- Student-athlete employment (Compliance with Bylaw 12, e.g., going rate, commensurate with experience.)

I**nstitutional plans for athletics...**

Written institutional plans have significant value for every Division I institution. They communicate an institution's current commitment, provide benchmarks to assess progress and also serve as enduring records that help ensure institutions' continued commitments in the future.

Institutional plans must meet, at a minimum, the following requirements:

1. **Stand-Alone and in Writing.** Each plan shall be committed to paper and shall be a stand-alone document.
2. **Broad-Based Campus Participation.** Each plan shall be developed with opportunities for significant input from appropriate constituent groups inside and outside of athletics.
3. **Issues/Problems.** Each plan must identify issues or problems confronting the institution.
4. **Measurable Goals.** Each plan must include the measurable goals the institution intends to achieve to address issues or problems.
5. **Steps to Achieve the Goals.** Each plan must include the steps the institution will take to achieve

the goals.

6. **Specific Timetable(s).** Each plan must include specific timetables for completing the work.
7. **Individuals/Offices Responsible for Carrying out the Specific Actions.** Each plan must identify the individuals and/or offices responsible for carrying out the actions identified by the institution.
8. **Institution Approval.** Each plan must be adopted formally by the institution's final authority in such matters to ensure that it carries the commitment and support of the entire institution.

Sample Formats for Plans...

A sample format for a governance-issues plan appears in this handbook as Appendix F, a sample format for a gender-issues plan appears as Appendix G, and a sample format for a minority-issues plan appears as Appendix H. They are intended to provide examples of plans containing all required elements and are organized in an easy-to-read manner. The same format should be used for any other plan developed by an institution. However, an institution develops its plans, it should ensure that it addresses the situations and issues unique to the institution.

Additional Considerations for Gender-Equity and Minority-Issues Plans...

The Committee on Athletics Certification reminds the institution that plans for improvement to address gender equity and minority issues in the intercollegiate athletics program must extend at least five years into the future, and institutions must maintain an active written plan at all times. Further, the gender equity plan must address all 13 program areas for gender issues listed in Attachment No. 2 of the self-study instrument and the minority-issues plan must address all eight program areas for minority issues listed in Attachment No. 3 of the self-study instrument.

Please note that an institution's plan for addressing minority issues also shall address equitable opportunities for both minority student-athletes and athletics personnel. An institution-wide affirmative action plan is acceptable only if it:

1. Specifically references, in the plan or in a separate document, the intercollegiate athletics program.
2. Addresses minority opportunities and needs (e.g., special programming, services of multicultural offices, general welfare issues) for student-athletes, as well as athletics staff.
3. Satisfies the committee's minimum expectations for a plan.

Finally, Operating Principle 3.1-(c) and 3.2-(c) require an institution to maintain a program, or continue progress toward a program, which is equitable for both genders and expands opportunities and support for minority student-athletes and athletics personnel. Within gender-equity and minority-issues written plans, specific numerical targets may place an institution at legal risk and are not expected nor should they be included in an institution's written plan. If an institution has already submitted a plan to the committee that includes specific hiring targets, the committee will not hold the institution accountable for achieving those specific numerical targets. Rather, the committee advises institutions to submit plans that have broad, flexible non-numeric hiring goals.

Definition of an Ethnic Minority...

For purposes of athletics certification, the Committee on Athletics Certification has adopted the following definition of an ethnic minority:

“African-American, Asian-American or Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaska Native or Aleut, of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity are those who indicate that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban Central or South American, European Spanish, or some other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin or descent.”

Further, the committee has determined that all institutions must complete a thorough review for conformity with Operating Principle 3.2, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As a result, in the second cycle of athletics certification HBCUs must develop and approve a minority-opportunities plan that meets all committee requirements.

Confidentiality of the report...

Institutional self-studies shall be treated as confidential by conference offices, the NCAA, peer-review teams and the Committee on Athletics Certification. Institutions, however, are permitted to distribute reports and supporting documentation at their discretion.

5 PREPARING FOR THE EVALUATION VISIT

Participating institutions, peer-review teams, the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification and NCAA staff members all have specific responsibilities in preparing for the evaluation visit.

Responsibilities of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification...

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification is responsible for selecting and assigning peer-review teams. In doing so, the committee is careful to control costs of the program by taking geographical considerations into account and through appropriate coordination with regional accrediting agencies.

The committee takes a number of factors into consideration when making peer-review team assignments:

1. Composition of peer-review teams.

As a general rule, the committee will assign peer-review teams according to the characteristics of the institution (e.g., public/private, size and complexity of intercollegiate athletics program), giving specific attention to whether the peer-review team includes:

- A sufficient number of individuals to handle the anticipated workload efficiently and still control costs.
- A range of expertise to cover certification topic areas.
- Appropriate subdivisional representation.
- Adequate representation of campus constituent groups.

2. Institutional recommendation.

About nine months before the scheduled evaluation visit, the committee will provide the participating institution with a list of potential peer-review team members selected by the committee from the larger pool of qualified peer reviewers.

The institution will review this list and, within approximately one month, may recommend to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification that particular individuals included on that list not be assigned as peer-review team members.

The committee will consider such recommendations but reserves the right to make all decisions regarding peer-review team assignments.

3. Notification of peer-review team assignments.

Approximately six months before the evaluation visit, the committee will notify the institution of the specific peer-review team chair who has been assigned to that institution.

As circumstances dictate, however, the committee may change the assignment of the peer-review team chair at its discretion.

4. Ethical considerations.

The certification committee relies on the professional integrity of institutions and of individual peer reviewers to avoid any assignment for which the slightest potential for conflict of interest exists.

Ordinarily, the certification committee will not knowingly assign an individual to serve as a peer reviewer who:

- Is employed at an institution in the same conference as the participating institution.
- Is employed at an institution in the state in which the participating institution is located.
- Is a candidate for employment, or has been a candidate within the past two years, at the participating institution.
- Has been an appointee, consultant or employee of the participating institution, or has close relatives who are employees at the participating institution.
- Is an alumnus or alumna of the participating institution.
- Has previously visited the institution as a peer-review team member or as part of a regional or professional accreditation team that either put the institution on probation or terminated its accreditation.
- Is associated in any manner with a for-profit organization that provides consulting services for athletics certification.

To avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest, no member of the peer-review team may serve as a consultant to an institution to which that individual was assigned as a peer-review team member for a period of one year after the conclusion of the evaluation visit.

Peer-review team members should not encourage staff members at the institutions they visit to seek employment at the peer-review team members' institutions, nor should peer-review team members suggest their own availability as consultants or employees.

Every peer-review team member must review and sign a statement related to potential conflicts of interest at the time that individual agrees to serve as a member of a particular peer-review team.

The committee proposed several changes in January 2004 with the intent of streamlining the athletics certification program. In addition to the legislative changes, a procedural change involving the committee was introduced. The committee will identify an institution's issues before the evaluation visit.

After the institution submits its self-study report via the certification Web-based system, the NCAA staff liaison will review the self-study report, verify all self-study items are completed, and ensure that all measurable standards are met.

Once the staff review is completed, the committee will review the institution's self-study and the staff's analysis of the report. The committee will determine the final issues that will be forwarded to the institution and the peer-review team.

Once the issues are released to the institution, the institution will have several weeks to address the committee-identified issues by providing the peer-review team with additional information before or during their visit or by developing plans for improvement in the identified areas. The peer-review team will focus on the list of issues identified by the committee in addition to verifying the accuracy of the self-study report and broad-based participation during the evaluation visit.

R**esponsibilities of the participating institution...**

In preparing for the evaluation visit, the participating institution is required to:

1. Submit its completed self-study report at least 12 weeks before the evaluation visit.
2. Make lodging and other arrangements for members of the peer-review team.
3. Make arrangements to cover peer-review team members' expenses that are the obligation of the institution and inform the NCAA staff member of the method of payment.
4. Establish an itinerary for the visit with the review-team chair and NCAA staff member, including materials to be made available on site.

In determining specific dates for the evaluation visit, the institution's commitment to specific dates carries an assurance that key institutional personnel will be available for interviews, including the institution's:

- Chief executive officer.
- Faculty athletics representative.
- Director of athletics.
- Senior woman administrator.
- Steering committee and subcommittee chairs.

Ordinarily, peer-review teams also will want to interview selected institutional staff members who participated in the self-study process, student-athletes and other individuals who might offer helpful information regarding self-study issues and the conclusions reached by the institution.

To the extent possible, and to the extent that it assists in the evaluation process, the peer-review team will inform the institution in advance of those individuals that peer-review team members will want to interview. The peer-review team also may request interviews, however, at the time of the campus visit without prior notice.

N**CAA staff members' responsibilities...**

The NCAA staff member assigned to accompany the peer-review team on its campus visit serves as the liaison between the host institution and the peer-review team.

The NCAA staff liaison verifies that the institution's self-study report (including any supporting documentation) is complete. In addition to verifying the self-study report is complete, the NCAA liaison will also provide a preliminary assessment regarding the institutions adherence to the measurable standards.

The staff liaison also is expected to supply the Committee on Athletics Certification copies of public infractions reports involving the host institution since its last institutional self-study.

As the date of the campus visit draws near, the staff liaison will contact the institution to confirm arrangements for the peer-review team's visit, including:

- Hotel reservations.
- Local transportation for peer-review team members.

- The itinerary and specific time schedule for interviews and other activities of the peer-review team.
- Availability of campus personnel for scheduled interviews.
- Involvement of the conference office (if any).
- Adequate conference rooms and work areas, sufficient computer resources, Internet access, printers, photocopiers, access to telephones and attention to other work related needs of the peer-review team.
- Reimbursement of visit expenses incurred by peer-review team members.

Responsibilities of the peer-review team and the chair...

The peer-review team chair is responsible for:

- In consultation with the other members of the peer-review team, identifying topic areas to which the team will give special attention.
- Assigning sections of the institution's self-study report to particular team members.
- Contacting the institution's chief executive officer before the evaluation visit for the purpose of better understanding special circumstances that might affect the peer-review team's campus visit.
- Consulting with the other members of the peer-review team to establish a schedule of activities (e.g., reviews of records, facility tours) for the visit, and to identify those individuals on campus who the peer-review team will interview.
- Consulting with the host institution, the appropriate conference office and the NCAA staff liaison to determine whether a conference administrator will take part in the evaluation visit and, if so, what role that individual will play.

In addition, all members of the peer-review team, including the chair, share equally in other preparations for the campus evaluation visit.

Each peer-review team member is expected to review the institution's self-study report and committee issues carefully in order to:

- Understand the organization and operation of the institution's athletics program.
- Identify areas in the report that may require clarification or additional information.
- Target specific topic areas as instructed by the committee for special emphasis during the campus visit.

Members of the peer-review team should take care to treat institutional self-study reports and committee issues as confidential.

Peer-review team members also are expected to make their travel arrangements, consistent with any billing instructions that the host institution may provide.

6 THE EVALUATION VISIT

Peer-review team members visit the host institution's campus in order to gauge the level of campus-wide involvement in the institution's self-study and to compare information contained in the institution's written report with knowledge learned firsthand about the athletics program.

Experiences gained by the peer-review team during the campus visit help the team to evaluate more fairly the information contained in the institution's self-study report.

By the end of the visit, the peer-review team will have reached tentative conclusions about the nature of the institution's self-study process, the accuracy of the institution's written report and the operation of the athletics program in relation to the certification program's operating principles.

Before leaving campus, the peer-review team is obligated to record its conclusions in a rough draft of the report that eventually will be forwarded to the institution and to the Committee on Athletics Certification.

In the meantime, the institution's chief executive officer, and perhaps other institutional representatives, are afforded an opportunity to hear the peer-review team's general impressions in an exit meeting at the end of the visit.

Length of the evaluation visit...

The peer-review team's visit typically takes place over a two-day, two-night period. The chair of the peer-review team is responsible for determining the length of time necessary for the peer-review visit based on a review of the self-study report.

Every effort will be made to establish a schedule in advance that reflects accurately the length of the evaluation visit. Unanticipated events on campus may require changes in the schedule at the time of the visit, however, and the chair is authorized to modify the schedule as necessary within the established period.

Ethical considerations...

The following guidelines have been established for evaluation visits in an effort to protect the integrity of the peer-review process:

- All aspects of the evaluation visit are to be treated as confidential. This confidentiality extends to evaluation materials provided by the institution (including the institution's self-study report); issues identified by the committee; peer-review team, conference or NCAA staff files and notes; conversations with institutional, conference or NCAA representatives; and conversations among peer-review team members, institutional personnel, conference administrators and NCAA staff members.
- Institutions may choose to host a meal or social hour early in the visit to give the peer-review team an opportunity to meet key campus personnel and to help finalize details of the visit. Keep in mind, though, that the institution should not feel obligated to host such a function, and if an institution chooses to do so, it should be modest and should not interfere with the peer-review team's ability to accomplish its work in the time available.

- Institutions should not offer and peer-review team members may not accept gifts or gratuities of any kind.
- Peer-review team members are expected to pay for personal and incidental items.
- The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification will not tolerate unprofessional or unethical behavior on the part of any individual participating in the evaluation visit on behalf of the committee.

Peer-review teams' basic functions...

Peer-review teams will perform three basic functions:

1. Verify the Accuracy and completeness of the self-study report.
2. Verify Broad-based participation in the self-study.
3. Verify issues that may prevent the institution from establishing Conformity with the operating principles as identified by the committee.

The peer-review team begins the evaluation visit by meeting with the institution's chief executive officer and with the steering committee to discuss the tone, purpose and schedule of visit activities.

After the introductory meeting, members of the peer-review team conduct interviews, review records and tour campus facilities to determine whether the institution's stated policies and procedures are engaged and functioning. Throughout the visit, peer-review team members compare and contrast findings with each other, then adjust their schedules and activities based on these conversations.

Verifying the completeness and accuracy of the self-study report...

In evaluating the completeness and accuracy of the institution's self-study report, the peer-review team will consider whether:

- Institutional responses address each specific aspect of all self-study items identified by the committee.
- Conclusions are based on data or records that are available and reliable.
- Conclusions are reasonable in light of the available data.
- All substantive concerns have been identified by the institution and a plan for improvement has been established to address those concerns.
- Where the institution has concluded that plans to correct problems in one area may adversely affect existing programs in other areas, plans have been established to maintain their current level of quality.

Verifying campus-wide involvement...

The peer-review team gauges the institution's level of campus-wide involvement by considering whether appropriate campus constituencies were:

- Represented on the steering committee and subcommittees.
- Involved in the collection and analysis of data used in drawing tentative conclusions/responses to self-study items.
- Afforded sufficient opportunities to respond to the steering committee's initial observations.
- Made aware of and provided access to the self-study instrument.

In addition, the peer-review team will evaluate whether members of particular subcommittees were involved substantially in preparing and evaluating the subcommittees' reports, and whether steering committee members were involved substantially in evaluating subcommittee reports and in preparing and evaluating reports of the steering committee.

In verifying campus-wide participation, peer-review team members will make use of the institution's written plan for conducting its self-study, written records of meeting dates and attendees, writing assignments, and opportunities afforded to campus groups to offer comments.

E valuating the self-study in terms of the operating principles...

The peer-review team's most demanding task is to assess the extent of substantial conformity achieved by the institution with respect to the operating principles identified by the committee. This evaluation inevitably involves subjective judgment. In making these decisions, the peer-review team should make every effort to:

- Base its decisions on reliable data.
- Be sensitive to the unique characteristics and circumstances of the institution.
- Remain free of personal and professional bias.

P reparing the peer-review team's written report...

Before leaving campus, the peer-review team must complete the draft of its written report to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification. Ordinarily, each member of the peer-review team would be responsible for drafting one or more sections of the report, divided generally according to those sections of the self-study members of the peer-review team were assigned.

F ormat of the report...

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification has established a standard format for peer-review team reports to promote consistency in the information provided to the committee—and on which the committee relies to a large extent—in rendering its certification decisions.

The format approved by the committee for the peer-review team report includes an introduction that identifies the members of the peer-review team and the dates of the team's evaluation visit.

*The body of the report contains:

1. An evaluation of the institution's self-study process as to openness, thoroughness, breadth of participation and accuracy.
2. Peer-reviewer observations of the institution's status related to the operating principles and committee-identified issues based on the information contained in the institution's self-study report and the team's campus findings (verified through a review of records and other data).
3. An evaluation of the institution's plans for improvement.
4. Additional issues the peer-review team believes should be addressed before the institution can be fully certified by the Committee on Athletics Certification.

Lists of the individuals interviewed and the institutional records reviewed by the peer-review team are included as appendixes to the peer-review team report.

*This will vary depending on the number and scope of the committee-identified issues.

The exit meeting...

The peer-review team also will conduct an informal meeting near the end of the team's campus visit with the institution's chief executive officer and, perhaps, other representatives of the institution. The purpose of the meeting is to offer the team's general impressions of the visit and to share information, including any serious problems that were discovered during the evaluation visit, that may be contained in the peer-review team's formal written report.

The peer-review team's comments during this informal exit meeting will address:

1. The institution's self-study process in terms of openness, thoroughness and breadth of participation.
2. Athletics program activities that were evaluated by the peer-review team.
3. Any issues (identified by the committee or peer-review team) that should be addressed before the institution can be fully certified by the Committee on Athletics Certification.

Rules violations...

NCAA rules define the relationship between an institution's certification decision and its involvement in NCAA violations.

Peer-review teams will include in their written reports any information discovered during evaluation visits concerning possible violations of NCAA rules that relate directly to the operating principles. The chair of the peer-review team or the NCAA staff liaison also will remind the institution of its obligation to self-report violations, and that the institution's formal response to these findings can be a factor in current or future certification decisions.

The NCAA Committee on Infractions also may recommend to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification that a particular institution's certification status be reviewed as a result of the institution's completed infractions case. The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification may review and alter an institution's certification status upon referral from the Committee on Infractions.

R**elease of information regarding the
evaluation visit...**

Until the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification renders its decision, the peer-review team, as well as the institution, will only publicize information regarding the evaluation visit's status—that is, whether or not the visit is in progress or has been completed—and the identities of peer-review team members assigned to the institution. After announcement of the committee's decision, the institution is at liberty to release any information regarding the peer-review visit.

7 ASSEMBLING MATERIALS FOR REVIEW BY

THE COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS CERTIFICATION

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification bases its certification decision on information from the following sources:

- The institution's self-study report.
- The initial issues identified by the committee.
- The formal, written report of the peer-review team.
- A written reaction from the institution to the peer-review team's report.
- Additional commentary deemed necessary by the committee.

Preparing the peer-review team's formal report...

Once the peer-review team departs the host institution's campus, the chair assumes responsibility for putting the initial report into its final form.

After all members of the peer-review team agree that the report is acceptable, the chair (with NCAA staff liaison assistance) then finalizes and submits a copy of the report to the institution's chief executive officer before its submission to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification. The chief executive officer will be given two weeks from receipt of the draft report for this review. Copies of the team's report also will be forwarded to the institution's steering committee chair, the institution's conference office and the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification.

Institutional reaction to the peer-review team's report...

After reviewing the peer-review team's report, the institution should submit a written reaction to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification. Even though the institution may have no substantive comments to provide, it should indicate this in writing to the committee. The institution's response shall be limited to:

1. Corrections of factual errors.
2. Presentation of new, relevant information not considered by the peer-review team.
3. Proposed additional corrective actions for remedying deficiencies (e.g., institutional plans for improvement).

E**valuations...**

The final task for the peer-review team chair is to complete an evaluation of the performance of other members of the peer-review team. The chair also will be asked to comment on the self-study evaluation process in general. The chair's evaluation and other comments are sent to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification as soon as possible after completion of the evaluation visit.

The certification committee also will ask peer-review team members to evaluate the peer-review team chair, the NCAA staff and the self-study evaluation process.

Institutions will be asked by the committee to evaluate the self-study process, and the work of the peer-review team chair, other team members and the NCAA staff.

All of this information may be used by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification to improve the peer-review process.

8 THE CERTIFICATION DECISION

Once the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification receives the institution's self-study report and the written report of the peer-review team, the committee is responsible for determining whether an institution's athletics program should be certified—that is, judged to be in substantial conformity with the certification program's operating principles and consistent with the institution's mission and purpose.

Certification committee members will not participate in determining the certification status for those institutions in which the slightest potential for conflict of interest exists. In considering whether a potential conflict exists, certification committee members shall apply the same guidelines approved by the committee for use by potential peer-review team members.

Basis of the certification decision...

The certification committee's decision is a two-step process. First, the committee must decide whether the institution's self-study was adequate. Once the self-study is considered adequate, the certification committee then works toward a specific certification decision. In both parts of this process, NCAA legislation requires that the certification committee base its decision on:

- Issues initially identified by the committee after reviewing the institution's self-study report.
- The peer-review team's written report.
- Additional written comments that the institution may submit in response to the peer-review team's report.

Additionally, the certification committee will include an institution's public infractions report in its deliberations when such a report is released after the peer-review team's visit. This is an extension of the program's procedures that require peer-review teams to be provided a copy of an institution's publicly released infractions report if the report was released after the institution's most recent self-study.

On occasion, representatives of the institution may be asked by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification to appear during one of its meetings to clarify various points, and that information also may be considered by the certification committee during its deliberations.

Determining the adequacy of the institution's self-study...

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification will review each self-study report to determine whether the report was completed in an appropriate manner—for example, whether the information contained in the report was accurate, and whether the self-study was conducted openly, with campus-wide participation. This decision is based both on the institution's self-study report and on the report of the peer-review team.

Please note that the committee may request documentation (e.g., Copies of grievance and appeals policies and procedures, EADA forms and worksheets) from the institution during the deliberations process, if necessary, to provide clarification.

P**ostponement of certification decision...**

The certification committee reserves the right to postpone the certification decision of an institution. Examples of conditions under which the certification committee will consider postponement of a decision include:

1. When the institution's self-study is deemed to be inadequate (e.g., lacking accuracy, openness or campus-wide participation). If the institution does not respond to the certification committee's concerns in a period of time specified by the certification committee, it may be placed in restricted-membership status. Such an institution shall not be eligible for certification until an appropriate self-study is completed, or
2. In instances in which the certification committee, during its deliberations, concludes that the institution has not received adequate notice from the peer-review team of a problem significant enough to affect the institution's certification status. The postponement allows the certification committee to seek written clarification from the institution and the peer-review team chair before rendering a decision as to the certification status of the institution.

C**ertification categories...****1. Certified.**

An institution that has been "certified" is considered to be operating its athletics program in substantial conformity with all of the operating principles. This classification denotes that (a) any problems identified by the institution in its self-study or by the peer-review team during its evaluation were considered by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification to be not serious enough to affect the institution's certification status, and (b) the institution demonstrated adequate follow-up to concerns/improvement plans directly related to the operating principles that were identified by the institution or the committee during the institution's previous regular and/or interim self-study.

2. Certified with Conditions.

An institution that has been "certified with conditions" is not considered to be operating its athletics program in substantial conformity with all of the operating principles. This classification denotes that (a) problems identified by the institution in its self-study or the peer-review team during its evaluation were considered serious enough by the certification committee to cause it to withhold full certification until those problems have been corrected, or (b) the institution did not demonstrate adequate follow-up to concerns/improvement plans directly related to the operating principles that were identified by the institution or the committee during the institution's previous regular and/or interim self-study.

3. Not Certified.

An institution that is "not certified" is not considered to be operating its athletics program in substantial conformity with the operating principles. This classification denotes that (a) problems identified by the institution in its self-study or the peer-review team during its evaluation were considered by the certification committee to be very serious or pervasive, or (b) the institution did not demonstrate adequate follow-up to concerns/improvement plans directly related to the operating

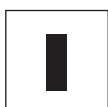
principles that were identified by the institution or the committee during the institution's previous self-study and action must be taken by the institution before it can be conditionally certified.



Other possible consequences for institutions classified as certified with conditions or not certified...

If an institution that has been classified as certified with conditions or not certified fails to make a serious effort to correct problems within the time specified by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, the certification committee may place the institution's athletics program in a restricted membership category for up to one year. As a result, the institution would not be eligible for NCAA championship competition in all sports. NCAA legislation stipulates that an institution placed in restricted membership shall remain in that category for a minimum of one year. However, an institution may request a waiver of such status from the Division I Board of Directors immediately upon rectifying deficiencies outlined by the certification committee. Such a waiver shall be submitted to the Board of Directors at least 60 days before the meeting in which the Board of Directors will act upon the waiver. The Board of Directors, by a two-thirds majority of its members present and voting, may waive the 60-day deadline due to circumstances beyond an institution's control.

If, at the end of this period of restricted membership, the certification committee concludes that the institution has not addressed the identified concerns properly, the certification committee may reclassify the institution as a corresponding member. This means that the institution would no longer be an active member of the Association.



Interim campus visits and additional institutional reports...

As part of its decision, the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification may require interim campus visits by a peer-review team or additional written communication with the committee to confirm that actions stipulated by the certification committee have been taken.

Interim campus visits (if required) would be conducted by peer reviewer(s) assigned by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification.

Generally, corrective actions for a certified institution would be expected to be completed without interim campus visits or additional communication with the certification committee. Actions taken by the institution, consistent with the institution's plan for improvement and any requirements of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, would be examined in the next regular certification cycle.

Corrective actions for an institution that has been certified with conditions, however, might suggest the need for written confirmation—and even an interim campus visit—depending on the nature and severity of the problems, the institution's apparent ability and willingness to correct those problems, and other factors that may be of concern to the certification committee.

Institutions that have been classified as not certified should expect the committee's decision to include requirements for additional written reports and/or interim campus visits.

N**otification of the certification decision...**

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification will communicate its certification decision, including any specific corrective actions, to the institution's chief executive officer in writing.

After notifying the institution, the certification committee will announce its decision publicly through a standard press-release-type report.

For institutions classified as "certified with conditions" or "not certified," the committee's public announcement also will include any corrective actions (and the timetable for completing each action) specified by the certification committee.

While other information related to the peer-review team's report or to the committee's actions will be considered confidential between the institution and the NCAA, the institution may release information regarding the committee's decision at its own discretion. The chair of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, or a member of the certification committee designated by the chair, also is authorized to offer additional comments concerning the certification committee's deliberations when an announcement is warranted.

O**pportunity for a hearing...**

An institution may request a hearing related to a certification-status decision from the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification. The certification committee is obligated to honor the request, but it should be noted that the request should not be related to any specific condition or recommendation, only to the certification-status decision.

To schedule a hearing, the institution must submit a written request to the membership services staff at the national office not later than 15 calendar days after the date of the public release of the committee's certification decision. The institution's hearing request should include an explanation of the basis for the hearing and an indication of whether the institution desires to submit written materials in addition to its in-person appearance.

The institution should be represented at the hearing by the chief executive officer (or his or her designee from outside the athletics department). Other institutional staff members may attend, and the institution also may be accompanied by legal counsel. The certification committee may request that other individuals (e.g., peer-review team chair, steering committee chair) be present.

At the time the request for a hearing is granted, the certification committee will provide to the institution written notification of other general procedures to be followed during the hearing.

Only decisions of the certification committee to modify an institution's certification status as a result of a hearing will be announced publicly through a standard press release. In such instances, the committee's decision will be announced after the hearing has been adjourned and the institution has been notified of the certification committee's decision in writing.



ppportunity to appeal...

An institution may appeal the decision of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification to the Division I Management Council. For such appearances, the appeal procedures established by the Management Council will apply. These procedures are available from the NCAA national office. Public announcements of decisions of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, however, will not be postponed pending appeals.

9 APPENDIX A: Compilation of institutional responsibilities

Following is a list of typical activities of participating institutions during athletics certification. This handbook offers additional information concerning these activities, and the page reference(s) in parentheses after an item indicate where additional information can be found.

Before the orientation visit...

- Form the self-study steering committee (Page 12).
- Involve the campus community (Page 13).
- Determine whether and, if so, how the conference office will provide assistance (Page 15).
- If desired, obtain the services of other individuals to assist in carrying out the responsibilities that ordinarily would fall to the conference office, and seek prior written approval from the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification for this kind of outside involvement (Page 15).
- Review the certification handbook and the self-study instrument (Page 16).
- Consult with the governing board and the institution's chief executive officer regarding plans and commitments that may seriously affect the future of the institution and its athletics program (Page 13).
- Prepare a tentative written plan for completing the self-study (Page 14).
- Identify potential dates for peer-review team visit (Page 16).
- If necessary due to extenuating circumstances, apply in writing to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification for modification of the institution's place in the certification schedule (Page 17).

During the self-study...

- Collect and organize data related to athletics certification (Page 18).
- Coordinate activities of the subcommittees (Page 18).
- Review reports of the subcommittees and the steering committee (Page 18).
- Maintain written records of meetings, writing assignments and opportunities to review draft reports (Page 18).
- Prepare the self-study report (Page 19).

Before the evaluation visit...

- Review and offer written comments concerning a list of potential peer-review team members selected by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (Page 24).
- Submit the completed self-study report to each member of the peer-review team and the NCAA staff liaison 12 weeks before the evaluation visit. (Page 26).
- Make lodging and other arrangements for members of the peer-review team (Page 26).
- Make arrangements to cover the expenses incurred by peer-review team members during the evaluation visit (Page 26).
- Ensure that key institutional personnel are available for interviews (Page 26).
- Address issues identified by the committee through factual clarifications, new information and/or institutional plans for improvement.

During the evaluation visit...

- Meet the work-related needs (e.g., copiers, computer resources, meeting rooms) of the peer-review team (Page 27).
- Participate in interviews with and make written records available to the peer-review team (Pages 18 and 27).
- Participate in an exit meeting with the peer-review team (Page 31).

After the evaluation visit...

- Review the peer-review team's draft report (Page 33).
- Respond to the peer-review team's written report (Page 33).
- If requested, appear before the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification to clarify information contained in reports presented to the committee (Page 35).
- Receive notification of the decision of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification and, if desired, request a hearing with the committee (Page 38).
- Revise the institution's plan for improvement in a manner consistent with the actions of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (Page 36).
- If requested, offer comments related to the self-study process, the work of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification and the work of the peer-review team (Page 34).

APPENDIX B: Compilation of peer-review team members' responsibilities

Following is a list of the basic qualifications and typical activities of peer-review team members involved in athletics certification. This handbook offers more information concerning these qualifications and activities, and the page references in parentheses after each item indicate where additional information can be found.

To be placed in the pool of peer-reviewers...

- Must be from a Division I institution or conference (or have recently retired) (Page 8).
- Must hold one of the designated institutional positions or have recognized expertise, skills or experience in particular areas addressed in the certification program (Page 8).
- Should have five years of campus experience as a full-time employee, including three in Division I (Page 8).

Before accepting a peer-review assignment...

- Complete required peer-review training activities (Page 8).
- Review the certification handbook and the self-study instrument (Note to the Reader).
- Consider whether the assignment would create a potential conflict of interest (Page 25).
- Review and sign a conflict-of-interest statement (Page 25).

After accepting a peer-review assignment and before the evaluation visit...

- Peer-review team chair and NCAA staff liaison establish the evaluation visit schedule and inform the institution of those individuals that the peer-review team members will want to interview (Page 27).
- Peer-review team chair determines the length of the evaluation visit (Page 28).
- Based on a review of the self-study report and committee-identified issues, peer-review team chair considers whether to modify the composition of the peer-review team (Page 24).
- Peer-review team chair assigns sections of the institution's self-study report to particular peer-review team members (Page 27).
- Peer-review team chair contacts the institution's chief executive officer before the evaluation visit (Page 27).
- Each member of the peer-review team reviews the institution's self-study report in relation to the issues identified by the committee, identifying areas in the report that may require additional information and targeting specific topic areas for special emphasis (Page 27).

- Arrange transportation to and from campus (Pages 11 and 27).
 - Determine the role of the participating institution's conference office (Page 27).
-

During the evaluation visit...

- Participate in the introductory meeting, interviews, review of records and facilities tour (Page 29).
 - Verify that the self-study report was characterized by campus-wide participation (Page 29).
 - Verify the completeness and accuracy of the self-study report (Page 29).
 - Evaluate the self-study in terms of the NCAA's operating principles (Page 30).
 - Verify issues identified by the committee.
 - Verify that a plan for improvement has been established by the institution (Page 31).
 - Develop a draft of the written peer-review team report to be sent to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (Page 30).
 - Conduct the evaluation visit exit meeting (Page 31).
-

After the evaluation visit...

- Peer-review team chair prepares final draft of peer-review report and submits it to the institution's chief executive officer before its submission to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (Page 33).
- Peer-review team chair completes an evaluation of the performance of the other members of the peer-review team (Page 34).
- Peer-review team chair comments on the self-study evaluation process in general (Page 34).
- Peer-review team members evaluate the peer-review team chair, the NCAA staff and the self-study evaluation process (Page 34).
- Receive notification of the decision of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (Page 38).

APPENDIX C: Responsibilities of the NCAA Division I Committee on

Athletics Certification

Following is a list of the primary activities of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, which is responsible for the administration of the athletics certification program. This handbook offers additional information concerning these activities, and the page reference in parentheses after each item indicate where additional information can be found.

- Develop and, as necessary, modify the certification handbook and self-study instrument (Page 14).
- Establish and, as necessary, modify the certification schedule for each participating institution (Page 17).
- Establish and train the pool of peer reviewers (Pages 8 and 24).
- Establish the format for the self-study report (Page 20).
- Select and approve peer-review teams for each participating institution and notify peer-review team members of their assignments (Page 24).
- Establish the guidelines for the evaluation visit (Page 24).
- Establish the format for the peer-review report (Page 30).
- If necessary, review an institution's certification status based on a recommendation from the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (Page 35).
- Establish guidelines for publicizing information related to the evaluation visit and certification decisions (Page 38).
- Review institutions' self-study reports, identify issues, review peer-review team reports, and render specific athletics certification decisions for participating institutions (Page 35).
- Require participating institutions to take corrective actions as necessary (Page 37).
- If necessary, participate in an institution's appeal of its certification decision to the Division I Management Council (Page 39).
- Review evaluations of the self-study process, the performance of peer-review team members and the certification program (Page 34).

APPENDIX D: Delegation of responsibilities

related to NCAA athletics certification

Committee on Athletics Certification	Step	Division I Member Institution
Orientation Visit by NCAA Staff		Prepare Plan for Self-Study Before Orientation Visit
	1	Begin Self-Study
	2	
	3	
	4	
Receive Comments Related to Potential Peer Reviewers	5	Return Comments Related to Potential Peer Reviewers
	6	
	7	
Assign Peer-Review Team	8	Learn Composition of Peer-Review Team
	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	Submit Completed Self-Study Report
Preliminary Review of Self-Study Report to Verify Completion and Identify Issues	13	Prepare for Evaluation Visit, Including Responses to committee-identified Issues
Peer-Review Team Evaluation Visit	14	Peer-Review Team Evaluation Visit
	15	
Prepare/Submit Peer-Review Team Report to Institution and Committee	16	Respond to Peer-Review Team's Report
Preliminary Review of Institution's Material	17	Receive Issues Correspondence Modify/Implement Plans to Address Issues and Provide Response to Certification Committee
Render Certification Decision	18	Receive Certification Decision
Release Certification Decision to Public	19	Modify Plan for Improvement to Include Additional Corrective Actions (as needed)
Evaluate Process	20	Evaluate Process

APPENDIX E: Sample Plan Format—Governance Issues

The following illustrates means by which an institution can present the major components of a plan. This example of one component is not meant to resemble an institution’s plan. Also, it is not required that an institution follow the items in this example. An institution should formulate an original plan that addresses its unique situations and issues.

Institution X Rules Compliance Plan

Issues in the Self-Study	Measurable Goals	Steps to Achieve Goals	Individuals/Officers Responsible for Implementation	Specific Timetable for Completing the Work
<p>The compliance review does not include a review of camps and clinics or student-athlete employment.</p>	<p>Incorporate camps and clinics and student-athlete employment into compliance reviews</p>	<p>The compliance coordinator, in conjunction with the conference office, will review camps and clinics and student-athlete employment into the once-in-four-year compliance review.</p>	<p>Compliance coordinator and senior woman administrator.</p>	<p>March 1, 2005</p>

Institutions may contact their NCAA staff liaison for athletics certification for more information regarding institutional plans.

APPENDIX F: Sample Plan Format—Gender Issues

The following illustrates means by which an institution can present the major components of a plan. This example of one component is not meant to resemble an institution's plan. Also, it is not required that an institution follow the items in this example. An institution should formulate an original plan that addresses its unique situations and issues.

Institution X Gender Issues Plan 2004-2009

Issues in the Self-Study	Measurable Goals	Steps to Achieve Goals	Individuals/ Officers Responsible for Implementation	Specific Timetable for Completing the Work
Scheduling of facilities does not reflect equitable opportunities for "prime" times.	Adjust men's and women's basketball practice schedules to reflect equitable/equal practice gym time.	Request practice schedules to be developed and submitted by all coaches in accordance with established policies to facilitate review by the head athletic trainer and, for at least the next academic year, the director of athletics and senior woman administrator.	Director of athletics, senior woman administrator and head athletic trainer.	Spring of 2005 and annual review thereafter.
		Place practice schedules on all regularly scheduled administrative staff meeting agendas.	Director of athletics and head athletic trainer.	Fall of 2004 and regularly thereafter.

Issues in the Self-Study	Measurable Goals	Steps to Achieve Goals	Individuals/ Officers Responsible for Implementation	Specific Timetable for Completing the Work
Salaries of men's and women's coaches are not equitable.	Increase assistant women's volleyball coaches' salaries by 15 percent.	Identify salary-adjustment periods of the institution and prepare appropriate forms for processing/ implementation of salary adjustment for specific coaches.	Director of athletics and human resources office.	January 1, 2005.

Institutions may contact their NCAA staff liaison for athletics certification for more information regarding institutional plans.

APPENDIX G: Sample Plan Format—Minority Issues

The following illustrates means by which an institution can present the major components of a plan. This example of one component is not meant to resemble an institution's plan. Also, it is not required that an institution follow the items in this example. An institution should formulate an original plan that addresses its unique situations and issues.

Please note that an institution's plan for addressing minority issues shall address equitable opportunities for both minority student-athletes and athletics personnel. An institution-wide affirmative action plan is acceptable only if it:

1. Specifically references, in the plan or in a separate document, the intercollegiate athletics program;
2. Addresses minority opportunities and needs (e.g., special programming, services of multicultural offices, general welfare issues) for student-athletes, as well as athletics staff; and
3. Satisfies the committee's minimum expectations for a plan.

Institution X Minority Issues Plan 2004-2009

Issues in the Self-Study	Measurable Goals	Steps to Achieve Goals	Individuals/Officers Responsible for Implementation	Specific Timetable for Completing the Work
Scholarship and athletics opportunities for minority student-athletes should be enhanced.	Enhance aggressive recruitment of minorities by all sports and, in particular, in sports that are under-represented by minorities.	Develop recruitment strategies for use in identifying minority student-athletes and document a retention program for enrolled minority student-athletes.	Athletics board, director of athletics, student-athlete advisory committee.	Spring of 2005 and annual review thereafter.

Issues in the Self-Study	Measurable Goals	Steps to Achieve Goals	Individuals/Officers Responsible for Implementation	Specific Timetable for Completing the Work
Minorities are under-represented on the coaching staff.	Enhance effort to identify and recruit minorities for each coaching opening that occurs on the staff.	<p>Modify entrance and exit interview forms for student-athletes to include information on issues affecting recruitment and retention of minority student-athletes.</p> <p>Analyze the reasons for lower numbers of minority student-athletes in specific sports.</p>	<p>Director of athletics, student-athlete advisory committee.</p> <p>Athletics board, director of athletics, student-athlete advisory committee.</p>	<p>Fall of 2004 and annual review thereafter.</p> <p>Spring of 2005 and annual review thereafter.</p>
		<p>Advertise open positions in publications that reach diverse populations.</p>	<p>Director of athletics, senior woman administrator.</p>	<p>Spring of 2005 with continuing action thereafter.</p>
		<p>Recruit with organizations that reach diverse populations.</p> <p>Have affirmative action staff members on each search committee regarding recruitment of minority employees.</p>		

Institutions may contact their NCAA staff liaison for athletics certification for more information regarding minority-issue plans.

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HANDBOOK

2004-05
DIVISION I
ATHLETICS
CERTIFICATION
HANDBOOK

