

NCAA Rules Education for Faculty Stetson University

Stetson University is committed to full compliance with NCAA and Atlantic Sun Conference rules. As part of this commitment, the University provides regular rules education to relevant constituent groups – student-athletes, the coaching staff, athletics department personnel, and select University staff and administrators. Since the University would be held accountable for any violations of NCAA rules by its faculty members, it seems prudent to provide a summary of rules and policies that relate specifically to academics and faculty members.

NCAA Bylaw 14.01.2 Academic Status

“To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies, be in good academic standing and maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree.” Exceptions to the minimum full-time enrollment requirement are granted for a student enrolled in the final term of the baccalaureate program (14.2.2.1.3) or who is enrolled full-time in a graduate program (14.2.2.1.4).

[Note: full-time enrollment is defined by the NCAA as 12 credits for undergraduate students and 6 hours for graduate students; progress-toward-degree is measured by NCAA and institutional standards. See the “NCAA Rules for Athletes” section in the “Resources for Faculty Advisers” section of the on-line advising handbook.]

NCAA Bylaw 14.01.2.1 Good Academic Standing

“To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be in good academic standing as determined by the academic authorities who determine the meaning of such phrases for all students of the institution...”

At Stetson, a student-athlete is considered to be in “good academic standing” if he or she meets NCAA guidelines for full-time enrollment.

NCAA Bylaw 16.01.1 Eligibility Effect of Violation (Awards, Benefits and Expenses for Enrolled Student-Athletes)

“A student-athlete shall not receive any extra benefit. Receipt by a student-athlete of an award, benefit or expense allowance not authorized by NCAA legislation renders the student-athlete ineligible for athletics competition in the sport for which the improper award, benefit or expense was received. If the student-athlete receives an extra benefit not authorized by NCAA legislation, the individual is ineligible in all sports.”

NCAA Bylaw 16.02.3 Extra Benefit

“An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or a representative of the institution’s athletic interests...” (often referred to as a “booster”)
“...to provide a student-athlete or the student-athlete’s relative or friend a benefit not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation. Receipt of a benefit by student-athletes or their relatives or friends is not a violation of NCAA legislation if it is demonstrated that the same benefit is generally available to the institution’s students or their relatives or friends or to a particular segment of the student body (e.g., international students, minority students) determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability.”

Examples of impermissible extra benefits include...

- Free or reduced-cost housing or meals (other than “occasional” meals)
- Loans (even if interest is charged) or guarantee of bond
- Use of telephone, faxes, photocopiers or credit cards
- Free or reduced-cost products or services
- Special payment arrangements for products or services
- The use of an automobile or provision of transportation (including a “ride home”)*
- Signing or cosigning on a loan on behalf of the student-athlete
- Gifts of any kind (even something as simple as a birthday card or cookies)

The “Extra Benefit” Rules as It Relates to Faculty and Academic Matters

The general rule is that faculty members are not allowed to provide support services, benefits, or treatment for a student-athlete that they would not provide for any other student. For example, a faculty member is generally not permitted to...

- purchase meals/drinks/snacks for student-athletes*;
- let student-athletes charge long-distance phone calls or faxes from office or home;
- let student-athletes use computer or other facilities unless those opportunities are offered through a classroom experience and offered to all students;
- offer special courses for student-athletes;
- create assignments for student-athletes that differ from those required of all other students in a class (this does not preclude an alternative make-up exam or assignment);
- offer student-athletes incompletes or extra credit work unless the opportunities are available to all students, as identified in a course syllabus.
- authorize a course waiver or substitution of academic requirements unless the same would be done for any other student under similar non-athletics-related circumstances.
- authorize a grade change, unless for valid, non-athletics-related reasons.
- handle any case of academic dishonesty or other prohibited classroom behavior by student-athletes in a manner any different from which you would handle such behavior by any other student.

* - there are limited exceptions to these rules, as long as the benefit is provided on an occasional basis. Please consult with the Compliance Officer in advance, if possible.

Allowing such “extra benefits” puts the student-athlete, his/her team, and the University in jeopardy. Not only would the student-athlete be penalized for receiving the extra benefit, but the institution would be guilty of a violation of NCAA rules.

On the other hand, faculty members should not refuse to provide support services for student-athletes that they would normally or reasonably provide to other students. For example, if a student-athlete must take a make-up examination because of a University-sponsored athletic competition, and if other students are afforded the opportunity to take a make-up examination for a good reason, then the student-athlete should be given the same opportunity.

Academic Monitoring

Faculty members also are strongly encouraged to assist the Associate Athletics Director for Student Services and the Athletics Academic Support Coordinator in monitoring the academic progress and performance and class attendance of student-athletes by returning the monitoring forms sent to you (via MAP-WORKS) twice each semester.

Missed Class Time

According to NCAA by-law 17.1.7.6.2, student-athletes are not permitted to miss class time for practice (other than when traveling to an away competition and the practice is in conjunction with the contest). However, there are times when student-athletes must miss class time for competition and competition-related travel. Within the first week of class, in-season student-athletes are required to provide faculty members with a sport travel schedule indicating any class days that will be missed due to competition and competition-related travel. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to notify the faculty member of any changes to that schedule immediately.

Communication Between Faculty Members and the Coaching Staff

Stetson’s policy is that coaches are **not** permitted to call faculty members or other instructional personnel to ask about student-athlete performance in a class. All contact with faculty members and other instructional staff should come from the Associate Athletics Director for Student Services. Faculty, however, may initiate contact with a member of the coaching staff. If faculty members or other instructional personnel feel as if they are being pressured into giving an unearned grade or if they are contacted by the coaching staff directly, they should contact the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative (Dr. Mike Bitter, 822-7422 or mbitter@stetson.edu) immediately.

Faculty Involvement in Recruiting

- 1) A faculty member can assist the coaching staff in the recruiting process by notifying them of any prospect he or she thinks would be a strong addition to the university and the athletics program [Note: a “prospect” is generally defined as a student who has started classes in the 9th grade]. Faculty members may also send Stetson University’s coaching staff any newspaper clippings, web site links, or other information about prospects which they think would be of interest. The coach, at his or her prerogative, can then make the appropriate contact. Faculty members should not contact a prospect’s coach, principal or counselor in an attempt to evaluate the prospect or visit the prospect’s educational institution to pick up game films or transcripts.
- 2) A faculty member is permitted to view a prospect’s athletics contest on his or her own initiative, provided that the faculty member does not contact the prospect, or the prospect’s parents/legal guardians, on such occasions.
- 3) An “unavoidable incidental contact” between a faculty member and a prospect (or his/her parents, legal guardians or relatives) off-campus is permissible **if** the contact is not prearranged, does not take place on the grounds of the prospect’s educational institution or at the site of organized competition or practice involving the prospect or the prospect’s team (i.e., high school, preparatory school, two-year college or all-star team), is not made for the purpose of recruiting, and involves only normal civility (e.g., exchange of greetings). Exception – “contacts” initiated by a student-athlete at any location is permissible provided the encounter was not pre-arranged and is limited to an exchange of greetings.
- 4) A faculty member may also have on-campus contact with a prospect and/or his or her parents/legal guardians during either an “official visit” or an “unofficial visit” to the campus. These contacts, if for academic purposes, may be arranged by an athletics department staff member.
- 5) A faculty member may also have contact with a prospect if he or she is an established family friend or neighbor. Such contacts may not be made for recruiting purposes and shall not be initiated by a coaching staff member.
- 6) A faculty member may have a phone conversation with a prospect **only** if the prospect initiates the call and the call is not for recruiting purposes (although “academic advisors” may both make and receive calls related to admissions or academic issues). Such a call may not be prearranged by an institutional staff member. The faculty member must refer any questions about the University’s athletic program to the proper athletics department staff member.

Conclusion

If you have any questions regarding NCAA Bylaws or related compliance issues, please contact the Assistant Athletics Director for Compliance (822-7490 or compliance@stetson.edu), the Associate Athletics Director for Student Success (822-8141) or Dr. Mike Bitter, Faculty Athletics Representative. If you have any questions regarding NCAA eligibility requirements, athletic academic support, or academic monitoring of student-athletes, please contact Dr. Bitter or Ms. PJ Moses, Associate Athletics Director for Student Services (822-8141 or pmoses@stetson.edu).