

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS CERTIFICATION

Athletics Certification System (ACS). In order to increase efficiency, reduce costs and add greater consistency, the committee developed a Web-based program, ACS, for the submission and storage of institutional self studies, committee-identified issues, peer-review team reports and committee actions. Self-study reports are required to be submitted through ACS, which is both ID and password protected.

Operating Principle (OP). The athletics certification program is made up of seven standards, OPs, which every NCAA Division I institution needs to meet. The OPs were originally adopted overwhelmingly at the 1993 NCAA Convention. They address the three basic areas of governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity and equity and student-athlete well-being. OPs are included as a part of the athletics certification self-study instrument and appear in NCAA Bylaw 22 of the NCAA Division I Manual.

Self-Study Item (SSI). A SSI is a question contained in the self-study instrument to be researched, studied and answered by an institution during its self-study process. In evaluating the completeness and accuracy of an institution's self-study report, the peer-review team will consider whether institutional responses address each specific aspect of all SSIs identified by the committee.

Measurable Standard (MS). The committee developed MS documents as a means to bring greater consistency to the athletics-certification process. These documents are intended to clarify the expectations of the committee for each OP.

Plans for Improvement. Written institutional plans have significant value for every NCAA 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 certain minimum requirements. There are additional requirements for gender-equity and minority-issues plans.

Staff Liaison. There is an NCAA staff liaison assigned each institution going through the self-study process. The staff liaison verifies that the institution's self-study report, including any supporting documentation, is complete. In addition, the liaison provides a preliminary assessment regarding the institution's adherence to the measurable standards. The staff liaison accompanies the peer-review team on its campus visit and serves as the liaison between the host institution and the peer-review team.

Orientation Videoconference (OV). The NCAA staff liaison will conduct an OV for an institution approximately 12-14 months before the evaluation visit. The purpose of the OV is to review the purpose and format of the certification program; the institution's activities already conducted in preparation for the orientation; the self-study instrument (with members of the steering committee and subcommittees); preparations for the evaluation visit; and projected dates for the evaluation visit. The OV is intended to benefit campus members who will be involved in the self study. The OV can occur anytime between August 15 and October 31.

Staff Analysis. After an institution submits its self-study report via ACS, the NCAA staff liaison will review the self-study report, verify that all self-study items are completed and ensure that all measurable standards are met. This results in the staff analysis. Once the staff analysis is completed, the committee will review the institution's self study and the staff analysis of the report. The committee will determine the final issues that will be forwarded to the institution and the peer-review team.

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

Peer-Review Team (PRT). An external PRT, selected and assigned by the committee, is composed of experienced educational and athletics personnel. The PRT is 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; and evaluating the self-study and committee-identified issues in terms of the OPs that have been approved for all NCAA Division I members. Before leaving campus, the PRT must complete its written report to the committee. Ordinarily, each member of the PRT is responsible for writing one or more sections of the report, divided generally according to those sections of the self study members of the PRT were assigned. A typical PRT will consist of a maximum of four members. Whenever possible, a president or chancellor will serve as chair. Each PRT member will receive training, with special emphasis on training for PRT chairs.

Evaluation Visit (EV). The EV occurs after the institution has submitted its self-study report, after the staff and committee analyses have been completed and after the institution has had an opportunity to respond to the committee's analysis. The EV is staffed by a PRT who 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 OPs. Before leaving campus, the PRT is obligated to record its conclusions in a report that eventually will be forwarded to the institution and to the committee. In the meantime, the institution's president/chancellor (and other institutional representatives at the discretion of the president/chancellor) is afforded an opportunity to hear the PRT's general impressions in an exit meeting at the end of the EV. The EV can occur anytime between September 15 and November 30.

Opportunities for Enhancement. As part of its report, the PRT will identify any pertinent recommendations for the institution in a section titled, "Opportunities for Enhancement." The institution is not obligated to implement or respond to such recommendations, rather, these should be viewed as helpful suggestions from the institution's peers to improve its athletics program.

Certified. An institution that has been "certified" is considered to be operating its athletics program in substantial conformity with all OPs. This classification denotes: (1) any problems identified by the institution in its self study or by the PRT during its evaluation were considered by the committee not serious enough to affect the institution's certification status, and (2) the institution demonstrated adequate follow up to concerns/improvement plans directly related to the OPs that were identified by the institution or the committee during the institution's previous regular and/or interim self study.

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 OPs. This classification denotes: (1) problems identified by the institution in its self study or the PRT during its evaluation were considered serious enough by the committee to cause it to withhold full certification until those problems have been corrected, or (2) the institution did not demonstrate adequate follow up to concerns/improvement plans directly related to the OPs that were identified by the institution or the committee during the institution's previous regular and/or interim self study.

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: (1) problems identified by the institution in its self study or the PRT during its evaluation were considered by the committee to be very serious or pervasive, or (2) the institution did not demonstrate adequate follow up to concerns/improvement plans directly related to the OPs 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.

Condition. For institutions classified as "certified with conditions" or "not certified," the committee will include any corrective actions, and the timetable for completing each action, specified by the committee. These corrective actions are considered conditions. For those institutions that are certified with conditions, the institution will generally have a one-year time frame in which to report back to the committee to rectify its conditions. Once the institution responds with additional information regarding its conditions, the committee will deliberate the institution's materials at its next in-person meeting.

Conformity. The PRT and committee's most demanding task is to assess the extent of substantial conformity achieved by the institution with respect to the OPs. This evaluation inevitably involves subjective judgment. In making these decisions, the PRT and committee make every effort to base decisions on reliable data; be sensitive to the unique characteristics and circumstances of the institution; and remain free of personal and professional bias.