Student-Athlete Handbook: Compliance and Eligibility

COMPLIANCE AND ELIGIBILITY

Philosophy

The Department of Athletics sets high standards for integrity, commitment, achievement and character. It is expected that coaches and student-athletes will adhere to NCAA regulations at all times. NCAA rules compliance is an essential component of upholding the integrity of Princeton University and the Department of Athletics. Compliance with NCAA and Ivy League rules and Princeton University’s Rights, Rules, Responsibilities ([https://rrr.princeton.edu/](https://rrr.princeton.edu/)) is a shared responsibility of all Princeton employees, student-athletes, representatives of athletics interests and prospective student-athletes. All parties are expected to bring forth information regarding any violations of NCAA and Ivy rules upon becoming aware of them.

Violations of NCAA, Ivy League and Princeton University rules are often inadvertent, yet it is each student-athlete’s responsibility to be knowledgeable of the regulations and report all violations, no matter how small in nature, to their head coach or the University’s Athletics Compliance Office. Coaches or student-athletes not reporting known violations can lead to student-athlete or team ineligibility or disqualification from participation in regular-season competition and/or conference and NCAA championships. The majority of the time these violations are classified as secondary violations and the student-athlete’s eligibility is quickly reinstated. Student-athletes are not expected to be able to interpret all of the applicable rules. Rather, they are expected to ask questions as appropriate. All questions should be directed to coaches and/or the Compliance Office.

The University, Ivy League and NCAA require that to be eligible for practice and competition, a student-athlete must be a full-time, matriculated student in a four-year baccalaureate program. Student-athletes must be enrolled in courses yielding at least 12 credits per semester (or a minimum of 3 classes per term at Princeton) while competing in their sport and make normal progress toward earning their degree. See more information on this in Academic Standards below.

To be eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics, a student-athlete must meet established eligibility standards. At the beginning of each academic year, each student-athlete must meet with an individual in the Athletics Compliance Office to review the rules and regulations governing athletics participation. This is typically accomplished with a team meeting in the fall. Each student-athlete must complete an Ivy League and NCAA statement certifying that he or she understands and has abided by all rules and regulations of these two governing bodies. The statement, along with other required forms that must be completed annually via a link sent to incoming and returning student-athletes each summer.

Faculty Athletic Representative, Eligibility Officer and Compliance Officer

The President of each NCAA member institution is responsible for appointing a Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR), an Eligibility Officer and a University Compliance Officer. Elizabeth Colagiuri, Deputy Dean of the College is Princeton’s FAR; Jonathan LeBouef, Associate Registrar is the Eligibility Officer; and Allison Rich, Senior Associate Director of Athletics/Senior Woman
Administrator, is the University’s Athletics Compliance Officer. Kelly Widener, Associate Director of Athletics for Compliance, has oversight of day-to-day compliance and is an excellent resource when questions arise. Collectively, the group of individuals listed above is responsible for certifying the eligibility of all student-athletes and ensuring that Princeton’s Department of Athletics personnel and student-athletes are in compliance with all NCAA and Ivy League rules and guidelines.

**Ethical Conduct**

Student-athletes must compete with honesty and sportsmanship at all times, and represent the honor and dignity of fair play. All Princeton student-athletes are expected to practice good sportsmanship in their conduct toward players, coaches, officials and spectators. A student-athlete who has shown dishonesty in evading or violating NCAA or Ivy League regulations will not be eligible for competition.

**Amateurism**

A student-athlete will be considered a professional athlete and ineligible for participation in Princeton Athletics if he/she:

- Accepts pay, or the promise of pay, for competing in any sport;
- Agrees to compete in professional athletics in any sport;
- Plays or practices with a professional athletics team as defined by the NCAA in any sport; or
- Uses his/her athletic skills for pay in any form in any sport.

A student-athlete is not eligible in a sport if he/she accepts money, transportation or other benefits from an agent or agrees to have an agent market his/her athletics ability or reputation in any sport.

A student-athlete is not eligible in any sport if, because of his/her athletics ability, he/she is paid for work not performed, paid at a rate higher than the going rate, or paid for the value an employer places on his/her reputation as an athlete.

A student-athlete is not eligible if after becoming a student-athlete he/she accepts any pay for promoting a commercial product or service or allows his/her name, image, likeness or reputation to be used for promoting a commercial product or service. This is an important provision to note when considering publishing a book, selling an app, or beginning an entrepreneurial venture—including a website or YouTube channel that makes money from advertisements. There are some exceptions and waivers available, so be sure to contact the Compliance Office as soon as possible with related questions.

**Academic Standards**

All first year student-athletes must have their academic initial eligibility (as well as amateur status) certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center, which operates independently of the University. The Registrar’s Office certifies the continuing eligibility of student-athletes.

To be eligible to compete, a student-athlete must:
Have been admitted as a regular degree-seeking student according to Princeton University published entrance requirements;

Remain in good academic standing according to Princeton University standards; and

Be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program and maintain satisfactory progress toward a bachelor's degree at Princeton University.

A student-athlete is not eligible to participate in any organized practice sessions in a sport unless he/she is enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies. Minimum full-time enrollment at Princeton is 3 courses. A student-athlete enrolled in less than three classes is eligible to compete only if he/she is enrolled in the last term of his/her degree program and is completing all remaining credits necessary for graduation.

In addition to being enrolled as a full-time student, all student-athletes must maintain NCAA standards of satisfactory progress toward their degree. Those include 6 credits earned per semester and 24 per academic year (with at least 18 during the regular academic year and not in the summer). (The 24 credit hour is only required during the first year.) A student-athlete must also complete specific percentages of the course requirements toward their degree program: 40% entering junior year and 60% entering senior year. Any student-athletes who have received a waiver to compete in their fifth year of collegiate enrollment must complete 80% of their degree requirements in order to be eligible for that year. It is important to remember that maintaining satisfactory progress per NCAA standards will not always be sufficient to meet Princeton University academic standards, so student-athletes should not rely solely on these rules and should not drop any classes without consulting their academic advisor or dean of studies in addition to the Compliance Office.

Seasons of Eligibility

A student-athlete is not eligible to participate in more than four seasons of intercollegiate competition per sport. These four years must be completed within five calendar years after the start of full-time collegiate enrollment.

Note: In the Ivy League, student-athletes are expected to use their eligibility within their first four years of actual enrollment. As such, there are no redshirt options. There are limited waiver options for a fifth year (fourth season of competition) which should be reviewed before a student-athlete is away from Princeton for the academic year. For those student-athletes who do not compete in all four seasons while enrolled at Princeton, there are opportunities to play that fourth season as a graduate student at another school. In both of the above scenarios, the student-athlete should meet with Kelly Widener in the Compliance Office as early as possible.

If a student-athlete chooses to transfer to another institution before graduating from Princeton, a Notification of Transfer form must be completed prior to any communication between the student-athlete and a coach from another institution. The Notification of Transfer is entered into a database called the NCAA Transfer Portal. All coaches have access to the portal. A student-athlete who does not use four seasons of competition while at Princeton may consider using a season in graduate school. The NCAA also considers this individual a transfer student-athlete. In both situations, the student-athlete must contact Associate Director of Athletics Kelly Widener for information on completing the form as well as the rest of the process.
Time Limits for Athletically-Related Activities

A student-athlete’s participation in countable athletically-related activities (e.g., practice, competition, required weight training, film or videotape reviews, required participation in camps and clinics, or team meetings) during the playing season must be limited to no more than four hours in a day and 20 hours per week. Note: The day of competition counts as three hours regardless of the actual length of the competition.

During the playing season, student-athletes must have at least one day off per week. On that day, ALL countable athletically related activities are prohibited. Additionally, per Ivy League rules, after returning from an away competition, there must be a ten (10) hour period with no athletically-related activities.

No class time shall be missed for practice activities except for team travel to an away contest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countable Athletically Related Activities</th>
<th>Noncountable Athletically Related Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practices (not more than four hours per day).</td>
<td>Compliance meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics meetings with a coach initiated or required by a coach (e.g., end of season individual meetings).</td>
<td>Meetings with a coach initiated by the student-athlete (as long as no countable activities occur).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition (and associated activities, regardless of their length, count as three hours). Note: No countable athletically related activities may occur after the competition.</td>
<td>Drug/alcohol educational meetings or CHAMPS/Life Skills meetings.</td>
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<td>Field, floor or on-court activity.</td>
<td>Study hall, tutoring or academic meetings.</td>
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<td>Setting up offensive and defensive alignment.</td>
<td>Student-athlete advisory committee/Captain’s Council meetings.</td>
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<td>On-court or on-field activities called by any member of the team and confined primarily to members of that team.</td>
<td>Voluntary weight training not conducted by a coach or staff member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required weight-training and conditioning activities.</td>
<td>Voluntary sport-related activities (e.g., initiated by student-athlete, no attendance taken, no coach present).</td>
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<td>Required participation in camps/clinics.</td>
<td>Traveling to and from the site of competition (as long as no countable activities occur).</td>
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<td>Visiting the competition site in the sports of cross country, golf and skiing.</td>
<td>Training room activities (e.g., treatment, taping), rehabilitation activities and medical examinations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation outside the regular season in individual skill-related instructional activities with a member of the coaching staff.</td>
<td>Recruiting activities (e.g., student host).</td>
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Outside of the playing season, student-athletes may participate in weight training, conditioning and other specific athletics activities. During this time, all participation must be voluntary. A student-athlete’s activities shall be limited to a maximum of six hours per week, and a minimum two days off per are required per week. In sports other than football, skill-related instruction (“practice”) is permitted for up to two hours per week, except during University Reading and Final Exam Periods. [Skill instruction is permitted during only the first two days of Reading period.] In football, film review and walk-throughs (without a ball) are permitted within the six hours of activity.

NOTE: In the sports of rowing, fencing, swimming and diving, water polo and field events for track & field, a coach may be present during voluntary workouts to spot or provide safety instruction, but may not conduct or critique the workout.
Rest Days

Per Ivy League rules, student-athletes in each sport will have 49 rest days during the academic year while classes, Reading Periods and/or Exams are scheduled. These days shall have no required athletic activity, no voluntary activity under the supervision of a coach, no team athletic activities (including captain’s practices), and no team or team member athletically-related activities resulting from encouragement by the coaching staff to engage in such activity. Under no circumstances will any athletically-related activity involving team members be supervised by a team’s coach, nor will facilities be reserved for team activities.

Team Travel

Student-athletes should remember that they are representatives of Princeton University on campus as well as whenever their team is on the road for competition. All trips begin when the team leaves campus and end upon return to campus. The following are a few items of importance:

There is no specific department-wide dress code for student-athletes on trips, but student-athletes should be aware of their status as representatives of Princeton University and dress accordingly. In addition, coaches may have specific dress codes for their teams. However, those dress codes are limited to dressing professionally or appropriately for the situation (e.g., warm-ups), and should not specify clothing like dresses or skirts that could conflict with a student-athlete’s gender identity.

Charges for hotel rooms and tax are the responsibility of the University; incidental expenses such as telephone; room service and pay movies are to be paid by the room occupants. Coaches may prohibit telephone calls and pay movies from being charged to hotel rooms.

To promote adequate rest and recovery, the Ivy League implemented a mandatory recovery period. This applies to all teams returning from any away competition. There may be no countable athletically-related activity for ten (10) hours after a team’s return to campus. This includes non-sport specific activities such as yoga or stretching/meditation. Student-athletes are not restricted from exercising individually. The rule simply does not allow for any required athletically-related activities.

Ticket Policies

The Department of Athletics charges admission for five sports (football, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s ice hockey and men’s lacrosse). For regular-season contests for which there is paid admission, the Athletics provides team members with up to four (4) complimentary admissions to be used by family and friends. Up to 48 hours prior to the contest, team members will have the opportunity to list the names of the individuals who will be admitted to the contest free of charge via a pass list. At no time will team members or their families be provided “hard tickets” for a contest. The pass list will be administered at a designated gate prior to the contest. Those listed by the team member must provide proper identification when they arrive at the gate.

A student-athlete may not sell or receive payment from any source for his or her complimentary admissions and may also not exchange or assign them in return for any item of value. Similarly, individuals designated by student-athletes to receive complimentary admissions are not permitted to receive any payment for said admissions or to exchange them for any item of value. Receipt of payment for complimentary admissions by such designated individuals is prohibited and considered an extra benefit which could affect a student-athlete’s eligibility for competition.
Details related to these procedures are provided by the Ticket Office in advance of any paid contests. This policy does not include postseason events. For questions about postseason tickets, student-athletes should contact their head coach.

**Outside Competition**

Student-athletes are not permitted to engage in any outside competition or any non-collegiate, amateur competition in their sport during the academic year. An exception to this rule applies during published vacation periods, when a sport is out of season, and only for sports other than basketball. Field hockey, men and women’s soccer, women’s volleyball and men’s water polo may begin outside competition on May 1 with prior permission from the Compliance Office if no classes are missed. Student-athletes in those sports should contact their head coach to begin the process of seeking approval for outside competition.

All sports other than basketball: A student-athlete is not eligible in his/her sport for the remainder of the year and the next academic year if, during the academic year, he/she competes as a member of any outside team in any non-collegiate, amateur competition. Competing in official Olympic tryouts and competition and other specified approved competition is permitted.

Basketball only: A basketball student-athlete is not eligible if he/she participates in any organized, outside basketball competition after becoming a candidate for an intercollegiate basketball team at an NCAA institution, or after enrolling at a member institution that recruited him/her to play on its intercollegiate basketball team. Competing in the Olympic Games tryouts and competition and other specified approved competition is permitted. It is permissible to play on a basketball team in a summer basketball league that the NCAA has sanctioned. Note: Student-athletes must receive written permission from the Compliance Office to play in NCAA sanctioned summer leagues. Student-athletes should contact their head coach to begin the approval process.

**Team Uniforms and Equipment**

Uniforms and equipment will be issued during the course of the season. The equipment managers are responsible for the washing and redistribution of practice and competition uniforms. Student-athletes should notify the equipment staff of any problems with or loss of uniforms or equipment immediately upon discovery. The cost of any equipment and uniforms damaged outside of practice or competition use, or not returned at the end of the season will be billed to the individual. Student-athletes are not permitted to sell any portion of their issued uniform, equipment, or practice gear—even if the item is question is no longer being used.

**Property Damage and Theft**

During both home and away contests, property damage and theft will be the financial responsibility of the individuals involved. In addition, violators will be subject to University disciplinary action. When individuals cannot be identified for such action, the entire team will be held accountable.

**Financial Aid**

A student-athlete may receive certain financial assistance other than the financial aid that Princeton distributes. The list of other permissible aid includes:
Money from anyone upon whom the student-athlete is naturally or legally dependent: or

Outside financial aid that has been awarded to the student-athlete and which has been reported to the financial aid office.

NOTE: Ivy League regulations prohibit the awarding of financial aid on the basis of athletic ability.

Any other aid should be discussed with the Compliance Office and Financial Aid Office before it is received in order to reduce the risk of losing eligibility.

**Extra Benefits**

Student-athletes may not receive “extra benefits” that are not generally available to students or to a particular segment of the student body (e.g., college, eating club) determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability. An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or representative of the institution’s athletics interests to provide a student-athlete or the student-athlete’s relative or friend a benefit not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation. Examples of impermissible extra benefits include discounts from businesses that are not available to the general public, use of Department of Athletics telephones, copy machines, computers, etc., gifts or loans from Athletics personnel, alumni or boosters, use of automobiles, gifts of clothing, or any other benefits not available to the general public or Princeton students.

**Modeling and Commercial Endorsements**

It is not permissible under NCAA rules for a student-athlete to endorse a commercial product or service once enrolled in college. However, if a student-athlete worked as a model prior to coming to Princeton, it may be possible to continue modeling if it does not relate in any way to his/her status as an athlete. All modeling or other commercial endorsements must be approved in advance by the Compliance Office.

**Employment**

Student-athletes may be employed, but may be compensated only for work actually performed and at a rate commensurate with their skills and experience and consistent with wages for similar jobs in that area. A student-athlete may teach sport-related skills on a fee-for-lesson or per session basis, but all lessons must be approved in advance by the Compliance Office, and no Princeton facilities may be used.

**Amateurism**

Unlike the NCAA, Ivy League rules require that a student-athlete must be an amateur in all sports in order to be eligible. Thus, it is impermissible to professionalize (e.g., accept pay or impermissible prize money, etc.) in one sport and maintain eligibility to play for Princeton in another sport.

**Sports Wagering**

Even though sports wagering is now legal in many states, it is still an impermissible activity for NCAA student-athletes, coaches and staff and results in severe penalties. Student-athletes should be aware that this includes wagering (online or in person) for any sport that has an NCAA
championship. This includes professional contests as well as any international or Olympic competition in those sports.

A student-athlete is not eligible to compete if he/she: knowingly provides information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics competition; solicits a bet on any intercollegiate team; accepts a bet on any team representing the institution; or participates in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate athletics through a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling. A student-athlete is not eligible to compete if he/she knowingly participates in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate or professional athletics, through a bookmaker, parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling.

Other impermissible forms of sports gambling include pay-in pools for the Super Bowl and NCAA Basketball Tournament (including purchasing a square), and pay-in Fantasy Sports Leagues.

The key to remember is RISK + REWARD = VIOLATION. If something of value is paid to enter and there is a chance to win a reward, then the activity is impermissible. A pool that is free to enter is permissible, as is one that has an entry fee but no prize.

Agents/Advisors

Princeton University student-athletes of high caliber may have the opportunity to continue their athletic careers at the professional level. Both Ivy and NCAA rules prohibit student-athletes from agreeing to be represented by an agent while still maintaining their amateur status. Student-athletes should consult their coach and/or the Compliance Office if they are contacted by an agent or advisor interested in advising them or talking with professional organizations for/about them. Student-athletes who are interested in securing representation or draft-status information should also contact their coach or the Compliance Office for more information.