

Prevalence of Graduate Transfers in Division I

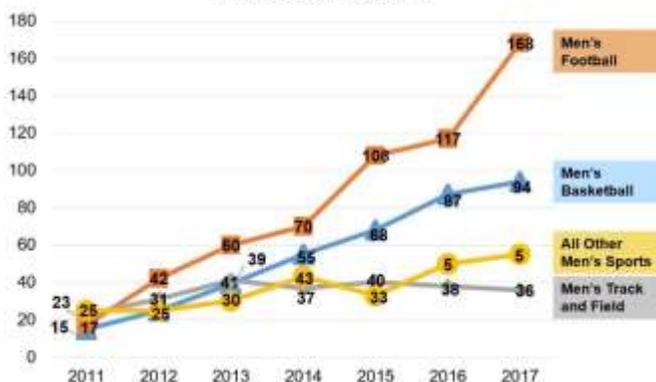
Division I student-athletes are earning their undergraduate degrees in [record numbers](#) and doing it more quickly than ever due to enhanced NCAA academic progress-toward-degree standards, increased financial aid for summer coursework at many schools, and students arriving on campus with college credits from either dual-enrollment or Advanced Placement coursework, among other factors. This has led to more student-athletes completing their undergraduate degree requirements before exhausting their athletics eligibility. Those students may continue to compete in NCAA sports if they enroll in graduate coursework or a second degree program.

Student-athletes who have earned their bachelor’s degree also may participate in athletics as a graduate student at another Division I college provided they meet certain criteria (NCAA Bylaw 14.6.1) or obtain an NCAA waiver. This so-called “graduate transfer” rule was intended to assist academically high-achieving students in pursuing a degree of interest that may not be offered at their undergraduate college. But it has become controversial in football and men’s basketball as high-profile cases have emerged and as [data](#) have shown that many transfers in those two sports earn few graduate credits and leave school when their athletics eligibility expires.

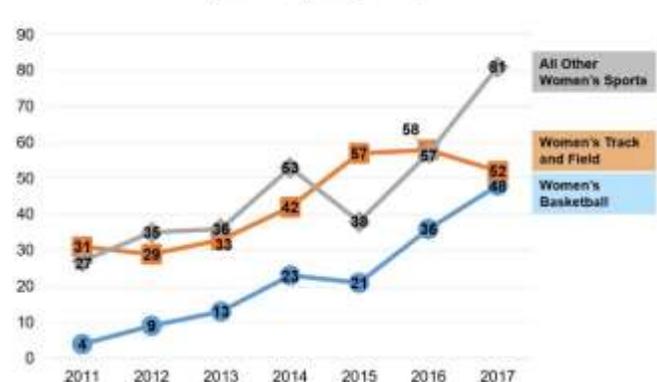
Just how prevalent are graduate transfers? From 2011 to 2017, the number of them has nearly tripled in women’s sports and quadrupled in men’s sports. However, there were still only 534 graduate transfers identified in the 2017 Division I academic performance data out of nearly 110,000 Division I student-athletes, which equates to just under one-half of 1 percent.

Graduate transfers are most prevalent on a percentage basis in men’s basketball (2.1 percent of current players are grad transfers), women’s basketball, football, and men’s and women’s track and field. Under one percent of men’s football student-athletes were graduate transfers in 2017 (0.8%). However, the number of such cases has increased almost tenfold since 2011 (17 in 2011, 168 in 2017). Trends across all Division I sports are shown in the full study results.

Changes in the Number of Division I Graduate Transfers (Men’s Sports, 2011-17)



Changes in the Number of Division I Graduate Transfers (Women’s Sports, 2011-17)



Download the full study results: [Changes in the Number of Division I Graduate Transfers](#)

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