

# HOW THE NCAA WORKS: Division I

When people think about college sports, they most often think about Division I. Its teams are usually the ones broadcast on television, they have the highest profile, and they are frequently subjected to public scrutiny.

The division is home to a wide range of schools with varying missions, admissions standards and athletics budgets. It includes some of the most highly selective universities in the country, and others with open admission.

Despite the differences, Division I schools share a commitment to the well-being of student-athletes, to creating sound academic standards and promoting fairness.

Led by the overall strategic vision of the Division I Board of Directors, comprised mostly of university presidents, the Division I governance structure provides autonomy for the 65 schools in the Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern conferences to vote on rule changes in specific categories. The rest of the division is then free to follow those adopted rules.

When governing itself on issues outside the areas of autonomy, though, Division I operates much like the other two divisions: Representatives serve on NCAA committees that determine the division's direction and develop legislation. Members of the Division I Council vote on these proposals. Both processes often work together to reach a positive outcome for college athletes.

These committees are among the Division I committees that report to the Legislative Committee.

**Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement**

Decides all matters related to reinstating a Division I college athlete's eligibility.

**Committee for Legislative Relief**

Makes final decisions on waiver requests in which no other committee or conference has authority.



Coaches and others knowledgeable about a particular sport make up committees that recommend to the Competition Oversight Committee where and when each Division I and National Collegiate championship should take place and who should compete.

**START**

Rule-making starts with the schools and athletics conferences that belong to Division I. If an athletics director wants to change recruiting legislation, for example, the idea could be introduced through the committee structure.

An individual conference can introduce an idea as legislation. Those proposals are reviewed by Division I committees, but regardless of their feedback, the Division I Council votes on all conference-sponsored legislation.

## DIVISION I COMMITTEES

<p><b>Legislative Committee</b></p> <p>Reviews proposals developed through conferences and Council committees and provides feedback to autonomy conferences about their proposals.</p> <p><b>19 members:</b></p>	<p><b>Nominating Committee</b></p> <p>Facilitates the process to appoint representatives to Council committees (non-Council positions), DI committees and DI vacancies on Association-wide committees.</p> <p><b>12 members:</b> Four from FBS; four from FCS; four from Division I Subdivision</p>	<p><b>Student-Athlete Advisory Committee</b></p> <p>Members are college athletes who monitor and act on issues at the campus, conference and national levels.</p> <p><b>32 members</b>, each representing one Division I conference:</p>
<p><b>Competition Oversight Committee</b></p> <p>Oversees regular season and championships administration in sports other than football and men's and women's basketball.</p> <p><b>19 members:</b></p>	<p><b>Student-Athlete Experience Committee</b></p> <p>Oversees nonacademic rules that impact the overall student-athlete experience, including areas of amateurism, recruiting and financial aid.</p> <p><b>11 members:</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Vision and Planning Committee</b></p> <p>Oversees administrative functions related to governance structure, legal affairs, membership standards, strategic planning and research.</p> <p><b>10 members:</b></p>
<p><b>Women's Basketball Oversight Committee</b></p> <p>Promotes development of the sport and makes recommendations related to regular-season and postseason women's basketball.</p> <p><b>12 members:</b></p>	<p><b>Men's Basketball Oversight Committee</b></p> <p>Promotes development of the sport and makes recommendations related to regular-season and postseason men's basketball.</p> <p><b>12 members:</b></p>	<p><b>Football Oversight Committee</b></p> <p>Promotes development of the sport and makes recommendations related to regular-season and postseason football.</p> <p><b>15 members:</b></p>

**KEY**

- ▶ Legislative path
- ◄◄ Member-sponsored legislative path
- ◄ Communication path

<span style="color: blue;">■</span> = President or chancellor	<span style="color: red;">■</span> = Financial aid administrator	<span style="color: green;">■</span> = Senior woman administrator	<span style="color: purple;">■</span> = Member school and conference administrators and others who work daily in college sports
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> = Division I Council member	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> = Athletics director	<span style="color: teal;">■</span> = Provost	
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> = Student-Athlete Advisory Committee member	<span style="color: pink;">■</span> = Faculty athletics representative	<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> = Conference administrator	

Besides the various required roles, the NCAA also works to ensure gender, racial and geographic diversity on its committees. Many of those diversity standards are mandated by legislation.

Committees debate the ideas and recommend whether the Council should introduce them as pieces of legislation.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is the top governing body for Division I, responsible for strategy and policy and overseeing legislation and management of the division.

- ◆ Focuses on strategic topics in college sports and their relationship to higher education.
- ◆ Approves an annual budget.
- ◆ Monitors legislation to ensure it does not conflict with policies and goals.
- ◆ Adopts legislation when significant values are at stake or an issue requires fast action that does not allow use of the regular legislative process.
- ◆ Reviews and approves policies and procedures governing the infractions program.
- ◆ Collaborates with NCAA staff on how the national office can best serve Division I members.

**Presidential Forum**

Made up of 32 presidents and chancellors representing each conference, it is the primary advisory body to the board.

**24 members:**  
20 presidents, 1 from each FBS conference and 10 seats rotating among the remaining 22 conferences

1 AD 1 FAR 1 SWA 1 student-athlete

**Committee on Academics**

Primary academic authority for Division I, managing eligibility standards and Academic Performance Program. Its work is subject to review by the Board of Directors, and it can recommend legislation to the Council.

**20 members:**

These committees report to the Board of Directors to ensure it is aware of infractions issues.

**Committee on Infractions**

Participates in hearings involving Division I schools accused of violating NCAA rules.

**Infractions Appeals Committee**

Hears and acts on appeals of decisions by the Committee on Infractions.

The Council has primary legislative authority for Division I, although its work is subject to review by the Board of Directors, which monitors legislation to ensure it does not conflict with the division's policies and goals.

**FINISH**

## DIVISION I COUNCIL

Made up of practitioners who work daily in Division I college sports, this body:

- ◆ Recommends nonacademic policies to the Board of Directors.
- ◆ Supervises qualifications and selection procedures for Division I championships and national collegiate championships.
- ◆ Coordinates strategic planning activities.
- ◆ Reviews recommendations from sports committees regarding the administration of championships.
- ◆ Identifies and examines trends and issues in college sports.
- ◆ Takes final action on matters delegated to it by the Board of Directors.
- ◆ Oversees Division I membership standards.

**41 members**, including one from each of the 32 conferences and one representative from the Division I Committee on Academics:

4 commissioners (one FBS autonomy, one FBS nonautonomy, one FCS and one DI nonfootball)

2 FARs

2 student-athletes

**Council Coordination Committee**

Made up of Council members who manage issues that arise between quarterly meetings.

### COUNCIL GOVERNANCE PROCESS TIMELINE

**SEPT. 1** Deadline for conference-sponsored legislative proposals.

**OCT. 1** Proposals available for comments, sponsor modification and amendments.

**NOV. 1** Deadline for Council-introduced legislative proposals.

**JANUARY** NCAA Convention. Votes may occur on some proposals (student-athlete well-being, time sensitive). Other proposals reviewed and discussed.

**FEB. 1** Deadline for sponsors to refine or change proposals and for conferences to offer amendments to existing proposals to narrow the scope.

**FEB. 8** Official notice of remaining proposals and amendments.

**APRIL** Council takes final vote on proposals and amendments.

### AUTONOMY LEGISLATIVE PROCESS TIMELINE

**SEPT. 15** Autonomy conferences submit a description of concepts under consideration for sponsorship.

**NOV. 1** Sponsorship deadline for legislative proposals.

**NOV. 15** Proposals available for comments, sponsor modification and amendment.

**NOVEMBER** Sponsors refine or change proposals and autonomy conferences submit amendments to proposals to narrow the scope by Dec. 1.

**DEC. 15** Once again, the proposed pieces of legislation are published on ncaa.org, this time in their final form.

**JANUARY** Representatives from the ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and SEC, including three student-athletes from each conference, vote on proposals.

## AUTONOMY

The ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and SEC have autonomy to make rules in specified areas such as meals and nutrition and athletics personnel.

**BIG 5**

ACC, SEC, Big Ten, Pac-12

15 schools + 3 students

18 votes

**XII**

10 schools + 3 students

13 votes

**BIG**

14 schools + 3 students

17 votes

**PAC-12**

12 schools + 3 students

15 votes

**SEC**

14 schools + 3 students

17 votes

= **80**  
Total votes

Two ways to pass legislation:

ACC, Big Ten, Pac-12, SEC + 60% of overall votes

Majority vote within 3 of 5 conferences.

ACC, Big Ten, Pac-12, SEC + Majority of overall votes

Majority vote within 4 of 5 conferences.

**FINISH**