Some rules violations adversely impact the eligibility of one or more student-athletes. Eligibility matters are not resolved through the infractions process. Rather, violations impacting a student-athlete’s eligibility are resolved through the NCAA academic and membership affairs (AMA) group.

At the close of an investigation, the enforcement staff presents any bylaw interpretation questions to the AMA staff, which provides an interpretation. If the school disagrees with the staff interpretation, it may appeal to a peer body called the Legislative Relief Interpretations Committee (LRIC).

If it is determined a violation occurred, the school declares the student-athlete ineligible and seeks his or her reinstatement from the AMA staff. If the school disagrees with the staff decision or the conditions of reinstatement, it may appeal to a peer body called the Student-Athlete Reinstatement (SAR) Committee.

The school may advocate for its position throughout the interpretation and reinstatement process.
NCAA members created the infractions process to ensure fair play and integrity among NCAA schools. If information suggests a violation occurred, the national office enforcement staff works with the school and involved individuals to investigate.

If the information is not credible or does not indicate a violation, the case is closed. If the investigation indicates a Level I or II violation occurred, the enforcement staff provides notice to the school and any involved individuals. The Committee on Infractions (COI), an independent group of qualified individuals from NCAA schools and the public, holds a hearing to review the facts and decide whether violations occurred and whether penalties are appropriate.

If the parties agree on the facts, the COI can decide the case through an expedited process called summary disposition. Challenges to the COI decision are presented to the Infractions Appeals Committee (IAC), another independent group of qualified individuals from NCAA schools and the public.

If it appears a Level III violation occurred, the enforcement staff issues a decision, which can be appealed to the COI.

Finally, if a violation involves a student-athlete’s eligibility, the student-athlete reinstatement staff issues a decision, which can be appealed to the Student-Athlete Reinstatement (SAR) Committee.
The NCAA enforcement staff is divided into specialty teams shown below. The development staff provides sport-specific, subject-matter expertise in football, basketball, track and field and baseball. It also reviews potential violations, complementing the investigation and processing staff in determining the facts of a case and whether to bring formal allegations.

Staff members in the secondary / Level III group process thousands of infractions reported each year by member schools. The quality control group works with all the teams to ensure procedural compliance, consistent decisions and accurate collection of data.

There are 57 members of the enforcement staff. Many of them are attorneys with varied backgrounds in criminal law, civil practice or government service. Many are also former student-athletes, high school coaches, college coaches, professional coaches, compliance officers or athletics administrators.

Each member receives intense orientation when hired and continuous training on rules, interview skills and other professional development. The enforcement department strives to attract, hire and train mature staff members who will provide excellent and efficient service to NCAA schools.