In the past, rule violations were characterized as either major or secondary. However, NCAA member schools recently adopted a four-tier structure designed to provide greater specificity and flexibility in the infractions process. Now, rather than major or secondary violations, the infractions are characterized as either Level I, II, III or IV.

Definitions for the various levels (found in Bylaw 19.1) measure the impact of the alleged behavior on the Collegiate Model. Level I violations are the most severe and Level IV are the least severe.

Level I and II violations are resolved by the Committee on Infractions (COI), with any appeals decided by the Infractions Appeals Committee. Level III violations are resolved by the enforcement staff, with any appeals decided by the COI. Level IV violations are processed by conference offices without involvement by the NCAA.

Member committees, rather than the enforcement staff, ultimately decide whether violations are properly characterized as Level I, II, III or IV.