



CONFERENCE SELF-STUDY GUIDE (CSSG)

2017-18

Due not later than June 1, 2018

NCAA Constitution 3.3.4.6 requires that member conferences conduct a comprehensive self-study and evaluation of their intercollegiate athletics programs at least once every five years, using the Conference Self-Study Guide. Once the self-study is completed, the Notification of Completion Form must be signed by designated conference administrators indicating the date of completion and forwarded to NCAA academic and membership affairs staff. **Please note that only the Notification of Completion Form, not the completed self-study document, is to be returned to the NCAA national office.** The completed self-study document and supporting documentation are to be retained on file with the conference office and available for examination on request by an authorized NCAA representative.

Questions or comments about this guide should be directed to Jay Jones at jkjones@ncaa.org.

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Introduction to the Conference Self-Study Guide

The NCAA Division III Conference Self-Study Guide (CSSG) is designed to assist Division III conferences in assessing the overall operation of the conference and to satisfy the self-study requirements of NCAA Constitution 3.3.4.6. On completion of the CSSG, the conference is required to submit to the NCAA academic and membership affairs office the Notification of Completion Form (which accompanies the self-study guide) signed by the chancellor or president, conference executive and other designated senior administrators, as well as indicating the date of completion. The completed CSSG is to be retained on file with the conference office and made available for examination on request by authorized representatives of the Association, including the NCAA Division III Membership Committee. Failure to submit the Notification of Completion Form by the deadline may result in the conference's loss of Division III strategic initiative funding. All new conferences must forward a copy of the completed CSSG to the NCAA academic and membership affairs staff at the conclusion of the initial year of conference membership. Completion of the CSSG is required at least once every five years.

The CSSG is not meant as a substitute for the NCAA Division III Manual or other NCAA or conference publications containing the rules governing intercollegiate athletics. Rather, its intent is to:

1. Provide a periodic review of conference policies to ensure sound conference operations in accordance with the Division III philosophy and the conference-based components of the strategic plan;
2. Involve senior-level administrators in a review of conference operations that can enhance their knowledge of how their athletics conference relates directly to their institution;
3. Familiarize senior-level administrators of Division III conferences to the conferences strengths and weaknesses; and
4. Identify specific areas in Division III athletics programs that reinforce appropriate current practices and/or identify areas that may require further attention based on conference philosophy and operations.

The CSSG should be coordinated by conference personnel in a manner that is appropriate and applicable to the conference. The CSSG should be completed with an intent that adequately represents all institutional perspectives. The study should include broad constituent participation and be provided sufficient time and resources to gather all information called for by the CSSG.

A committee comprised of chancellors or presidents and other staff (including, but not limited to, conference executives, senior administrators with athletics oversight, faculty athletics representatives, directors of athletics, senior woman administrators, coaches, sports medicine personnel, sports information personnel and student-athletes) should be included in the completion of the CSSG. Following this initial study, the committee may wish to perform periodic follow-up checks using the entire instrument or selected sections that relate to specific areas of concern.

Conference committees also may find it useful to develop a written action plan that addresses areas of concern or specific initiatives identified during the self-study.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions included in the CSSG. Rather, the focus will be on identifying key issues of importance to all conferences, encouraging and ensuring that dialogue occurs regarding those topics.

Conferences are encouraged to circulate the CSSG among its member institutions and establish dialogue on issues of importance.

Use of Outside Consultants

Conferences may wish to involve outside consultants in the self-study process. Should a conference involve outside consultants, the functions of these individuals or agencies should be limited to data collection and organization of the self-study process. In such cases, it is understood that the self-study remains the responsibility of the conference to examine its own program and generate the substance of the self-study guide. In no way should the balance of responsibility for the study shift from internal to external personnel.

To receive further information or to submit comments regarding the CSSG, please contact Jay Jones, Associate Director of Division III at 317/917-6004 or jkjones@ncaa.org.

Throughout the self-study process, conferences are encouraged to review the Division III philosophy and strategic positioning platform to provide a framework for contemplation.

DIVISION III PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience, and in which coaches play a significant role as educators. They also seek to establish and maintain an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among their student-athletes and athletics staff.

To achieve this end, Division III institutions:

- (a) Expect that institutional presidents and chancellors have the ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the intercollegiate athletics program at the institutional, conference and national governance levels;
- (b) Place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators and place greater emphasis on the internal constituency (e.g., students, alumni, institutional personnel) than on the general public and its entertainment needs;
- (c) Shall not award financial aid to any student on the basis of athletics leadership, ability, participation or performance;
- (d) Primarily focus on intercollegiate athletics as a four-year, undergraduate experience;
- (e) Encourage the development of sportsmanship and positive societal attitudes in all constituents, including student-athletes, coaches, administrative personnel and spectators;
- (f) Encourage participation by maximizing the number and variety of sport offerings for their students through broad-based athletics programs;
- (g) Assure that the actions of coaches and administrators exhibit fairness, openness and honesty in their relationships with student-athletes;
- (h) Assure that athletics participants are not treated differently from other members of the student body;
- (i) Assure that student-athletes are supported in their efforts to meaningfully participate in nonathletic pursuits to enhance their overall educational experience;
- (j) Assure that athletics programs support the institution's educational mission by financing, staffing and controlling the programs through the same general procedures as other departments of the institution. Further, the administration of an institution's athletics program (e.g., hiring, compensation, professional development, certification of coaches) should be integrated into the campus culture and educational mission;
- (k) Assure that athletics recruitment complies with established institutional policies and procedures applicable to the admission process;

- (l) Exercise institutional and/or conference autonomy in the establishment of initial and continuing eligibility standards for student-athletes;
- (m) Assure that academic performance of student-athletes is, at a minimum, consistent with that of the general student body;
- (n) Assure that admission policies for student-athletes comply with policies and procedures applicable to the general student body;
- (o) Provide equitable athletics opportunities for males and females and give equal emphasis to men's and women's sports;
- (p) Support ethnic and gender diversity for all constituents;
- (q) Give primary emphasis to regional in-season competition and conference championships; and
- (r) Support student-athletes in their efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance, which may include opportunities for participation in national championships, by providing all teams with adequate facilities, competent coaching and appropriate competitive opportunities.

The purpose of the NCAA is to assist its members in developing the basis for consistent, equitable competition while minimizing infringement on the freedom of individual institutions to determine their own special objectives and programs. The above statement articulates principles that represent a commitment to Division III membership and shall serve as a guide for the preparation of legislation by the division and for planning and implementation of programs by institutions and conferences.

In addition, each aspect of the Division III experience embodies one of six attributes. As this document is completed, conferences are encouraged to reflect on how these attributes may be incorporated into conference philosophy, structure and programming.

Division III Attributes

Proportion: Appropriate relation of academics with opportunities to pursue athletics and other passions.

Comprehensive Learning: Opportunity for broad-based education and success.

Passion: Playing for the love of the game, competition, fun and self-improvement.

Responsibility: Development of accountability through personal commitment and choices.

Sportsmanship: Fair and respectful conduct toward all participants and supporters.

Citizenship: Dedication to developing responsible leaders and citizens in our communities.

A. Conference Purpose, Philosophy and Attributes

1. Conference Philosophy. What is the conference's statement of philosophy and/or mission statement? How is the philosophy and/or mission statement used to guide conference policy, decision-making, and strategic planning?
2. Alignment with Division III Philosophy. How does the conference's statement of philosophy and/or mission statement align with the Division III Philosophy Statement? In what ways does the conference incorporate elements of the DIII Identity and Strategic platform into the conference initiatives or strategic planning process?
3. Institutional Attributes of Member Institutions. How do the member institution missions, locations and profiles (e.g., public/private, religious) positively or negatively contribute to the achievement of conference ideals? In what ways, if any, is the composition of your conference a reflection of the conference philosophy? How do member institution attributes impact how the conference forms policies? When accepting new member institutions or releasing current ones, what are the conference's primary considerations (e.g., obtaining and maintaining AQ, scheduling, religious affiliation, academic profile)?

B. Conference Organization and Operation

1. Conference Office Structure. Provide a conference office organizational chart or include it as part of the governance chart submitted in B.2. Provide the job descriptions for each member of the conference office staff. What are the core responsibilities of the conference office? Are conference-wide expectations of the conference office staff definable, obtainable and measurable? What physical and financial resources are provided for the conference office operation and how are those resources funded? Is the current conference office staffing sufficient to adequately meet the needs of the conference member institutions?
2. (a) Governance Structure. Provide a conference governance organizational chart. If a constituent is not represented in the conference governance process, how does the conference engage them in conference issues? (e.g., Coaches, FARs, SWAs, ADRs, SAAC)
- (b) Involvement of Institutional Personnel. How are the following constituents involved in conference governance and administration? Do these constituents play an active role in conference governance? Are these constituents involved in determining conference policies?
 - a. Chancellor or President.

- b. Athletics Direct Report (if applicable).
 - c. Director of Athletics.
 - d. Senior Woman Administrator.
 - e. Faculty Athletics Representative.
 - f. Coaches, Sports Medicine and Sports Information Staff.
 - g. SAAC.
3. Presidential Oversight. How does the conference ensure chancellors or presidents have ultimate and final authority for the conference? How often do the conference chancellors and presidents meet as a group?
 4. Membership Process. What are the procedures for when an institution joins the conference or leaves the conference? How do conference bylaws specifically address inquiries for affiliate/associate membership? What is the exit policy and process when an institution is leaving the conference?
 5. NCAA Division III Strategic Initiative Grant Program. What policies does the conference have in place for allocating the strategic initiative grants that ensures broad constituent involvement? Are the conference policies for access and distribution of funds reviewed on an ongoing basis? How does the conference determine and administer educational programs and services to best meet its needs and support the goals of the Division III strategic plan? How does the conference review the annual impact form with member schools?
 6. Scheduling. Do you have a conference scheduling policy? If yes, does the policy ensure that your member institutions are following membership and championship selection criteria? Are scheduling policies equitable for men's and women's sports?
 7. Championship Sponsorship and Policies. How are championship decisions made? Does your conference have standing committee(s) Are you conducting conference championships? How do you ensure that student-athletes are given the opportunity to compete in a conference championship that provides them with an overall rewarding championship experience?
 8. Communication. Detail the conference's established system of communicating with the membership and identify any areas for improvement

C. Conference Accountability and Control

1. Rules Compliance. What role does the conference play related to NCAA rules compliance? Describe the conference expectations/policies regarding NCAA rules compliance (i.e., protocol for submitting interpretation requests, self-reports via RSRO, submission of sport sponsorship & demographic forms and/or the ISSG).
2. Rules Education. What role does the conference play with regard to NCAA rules education? Describe any resources, initiatives or tools the conference produces or distributes to the membership to assist in compliance.
3. Risk Management. How does the conference conduct risk assessment and implement risk management policies (e.g., liability and D&O insurance, additionally insured, event-related liability coverage, etc.)?
4. Data Reporting and Information Sharing. What role (if any) does the conference office play in creating reports related to institutional-based data (e.g., institutional financial aid reports, Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA), student-athlete academic performance results)? How are those conference-created reports used within the league? With who are these reports shared (e.g., presidents, directors of athletics)
5. Academic Performance of Student-Athletes. Does your conference have academic and eligibility standards that differ from the NCAA standards for continuing student-athletes and/or transfers? If so, what are those and how are they monitored?
6. Fiscal Policies and Stability. How often are conference fiscal policies and procedures reviewed to ensure future financial stability for the conference?
7. Budget and Financial Review Process. How is the conference operational budget established? Do conference policies require that all expenses and revenues associated with the operation of the conference be audited? If so, how often? If not, how does the conference conduct a financial review?
8. Grant Third-Party Review Form. What is the process for the annual completion of the NCAA Division III Strategic Initiative Grant Program third-party review form?

D. NCAA Involvement

1. NCAA Committee Service and Leadership. What role have conference members played in the NCAA governance structure? What role does the conference office assume in encouraging self-nomination or actively nominating—chancellors or presidents, faculty and athletics administrators to fill vacancies on Association-

wide and Division III committees? How does the conference office assist in getting conference representation on sports and/or rules committees?

2. NCAA Convention Attendance. How does the conference ensure attendance at the NCAA Convention? What is the conference philosophy regarding involvement in the NCAA governance structure, including voting at the Convention? How is the conference vote on legislative proposals developed? Who provides input and who has final authority?

E. Sportsmanship, Ethical Conduct and Diversity

1. Conference Sportsmanship Statement. Does the conference have a sportsmanship statement or policy? If so, include the statement or policy within your report. How is the sportsmanship statement or policy administered at athletics events? How does the conference office assist member institutions in sportsmanship education? What conference initiatives are in place to address sportsmanship both on the field and in the stands (game-day environment)?
2. Diversity. Describe any diversity and/or inclusion initiatives or programs your conference currently supports or promotes. Describe any plans the conference has for addressing related issues in the next one to three years.

F. Student-Athlete Inclusion and Development

- Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Does the conference have a SAAC statement of philosophy and/or mission statement? If so, include within your report. Describe the level of activity and engagement of the Conference SAAC. What have been its primary areas of focus in the past two to three years? Describe any ongoing or upcoming initiatives or programs in which the conference SAAC is engaged. How is the SAAC incorporated into the governance structure and/or legislative process?

CSSG
Notification of Completion

This form is to be returned by the conference executive on completion of the conference's self-study required at least once every five years in accordance with Constitution 3.3.4.6. **Please note that only this form, not the completed self-study document, is to be returned to the NCAA national office.** The completed self-study document and supporting documentation are to be retained on file with the conference office and available for examination on request by an authorized NCAA representative.

This is to certify that

(Conference)

has completed a comprehensive self-study and evaluation using the Conference Self-Study Guide in accordance with the provisions of Constitution 3.3.4.6 and that a conference plan to correct areas determined to be program weaknesses will be implemented and placed on file with this study. It is understood that a report of the self-study and supporting documentation are available for examination on request by an authorized representative of the NCAA.

Printed name of designated conference chancellor or president representative*

Signature

Printed name of conference executive (commissioner)

Signature

Printed name of designated conference director of athletics representative

Signature

Printed name of designated conference senior woman administrator representative

Signature

Printed name of designated conference faculty athletics representative

Signature

Printed name of designated student-athlete advisory committee representative

Signature

*This is an institution's chancellor or president.

Date CSSG was completed: _____

Names and titles of individuals on the self-study committee (please note chair):

Did your conference use an outside consultant? Yes No

If yes, describe the responsibilities of the outside consultant. Please refer to Page No. 3 for limitations on the use of outside consultants.

Active Division III members should return Notification of Completion (but not the completed CSSG) via email (scanned) not later than June 1, 2018 to:

**Kristin DiBiase
knesbitt@ncaa.org**

Questions or comments should be directed to Jay Jones at jkjones@ncaa.org.