

Tracking Division I Graduate Transfers

Division I student-athletes who earn a bachelor's degree prior to exhausting their athletics eligibility may go on to compete as graduate students for another school provided they meet certain criteria (NCAA Bylaw 14.6.1) or obtain an NCAA waiver. The NCAA identified 353 graduate transfers from 2011 and 2012, and was able to track academic outcomes for 258 (73%). What did we learn?

Who are graduate transfers?

Half were men's basketball or football participants, and most did not need a waiver to compete (15% needed a waiver in football, 29% in men's basketball). Only one-quarter of graduate transfers departed for a school within the five major conferences.

In what types of graduate programs did they enroll?

Many fields of study were represented among graduate transfers (see table). However, the common element was program length—85% entered graduate programs requiring more than one year of study.

Did these student-athletes earn their graduate degree?

After two years, only one-quarter of the graduate transfers in football and one-third in men's basketball had earned a graduate degree. Completion percentages were higher outside of those two sports, especially among women. Nearly 40% of the football players in this sample departed by the end of their first graduate term. Non-completers typically withdrew at the point when athletics eligibility was exhausted.

Graduate Program Length	
1 year program	15%
1.5 year program	8%
2 year program	72%
>2 year program	6%
Graduate Program Type	
Business	20%
Education	19%
Rec., Leisure & Fitness	15%
Social Science	14%
Other, Interdisciplinary	11%
Gen. Studies & Humanities	8%
Communications	7%
Science	5%
Engineering Related	2%

