Important Changes for Division I

The rules regarding software-based credit recovery, virtual, online, independent study and correspondence courses have changed. These types of courses, which are identified by the NCAA Eligibility Center as nontraditional courses, must meet new guidelines in order to be used for college-bound student-athletes who are planning to attend an NCAA Division I college or university.

What Are the Changes?

Nontraditional courses must meet the following:

1. Courses that are taught through distance learning, online, credit recovery, etc. need to be comparable in length, content and rigor to courses taught in a traditional classroom setting. Students may not skip lessons or test out of modules. The course must be four-year college preparatory.
2. All courses must include ongoing access between the instructor and student, as well as regular interaction for purposes of teaching, evaluating and providing assistance. This may include, for example, exchanging of e-mails between the student and teacher, feedback on assignments, and the opportunity for the teacher to engage the student in individual instruction.
3. Any course taken must have a defined time period for completion. For example, it should be clear whether the course is meant to be taken for an entire semester or during a more condensed time frame, such as six weeks, etc.
4. Nontraditional courses should be clearly identified as such on the high school transcript.

When Does this Rule Take Effect?

The rule applies to courses completed on or after August 1, 2010, for students first entering an NCAA Division I college or university on or after August 1, 2010. Nontraditional courses completed prior to August 1, 2010, will be reviewed under current NCAA standards.

It is important to remember that all courses need to be rigorous, four-year college preparatory in nature. Students should be encouraged to take courses that are quantitatively and qualitatively the same as courses offered through traditional means, and to take courses that will prepare them for the academic rigors they will face at a four-year college or university.

To read more about this new rule, go to www.eligibilitycenter.org and click the "High Schools Enter Here" link, then the "Resources" page and read the documents related to online/virtual/credit recovery courses.

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