



Bemidji State University Compliance

DI NCAA Progress Towards Degree 101: The Basics

What is “Progress Towards Degree”?:

Progress Towards Degree is a bylaw in the NCAA handbook that requires student-athletes to enroll and pass courses that fall into their degree program. The rationale behind this bylaw is to prohibit student-athletes from enrolling in “easy” courses during the academic year so they can solely focus on their particular sport.

What counts as “Progress Towards Degree”?:

In a student-athlete’s first two years of full-time enrollment, virtually anything counts, with one particular exception. If a student needs to enroll in a developmental course (such as MATH 0800) then we can only count that math course during their first year of enrollment, including summer. Beginning of a student-athlete’s third year of enrollment, credits taken by the student-athlete must be towards their designated degree program. A student-athlete in their third year and beyond is permitted to take: remaining liberal education requirements, courses within a student’s major and minor.

Degree Designation:

The student-athlete needs to have their major and minor declared and on their transcript **before** the first day of classes of the term for the compliance staff to count the credit hours for the term in which they are enrolling in. A student is permitted to be undecided their first two years of college but must officially declare their major starting their third year of college.

What are the credit hour requirements for “Progress Towards Degree”?:

In order for a student-athlete to compete, practice or receive an athletic based scholarship, the student athlete needs to be enrolled as a full-time student. During the regular academic year, a student-athlete must complete a minimum of **six** progress towards degree credit hours per regular academic semester in order to be eligible for the next academic semester. A student-athlete must also pass a minimum of **18** progress towards degree credit hours during the academic year.

40/60/80 Rule:

At the conclusion of the student-athlete’s sophomore year of college, the student-athlete needs to complete 40% of their degree program. At the conclusion of the student-athlete’s junior year, the student-athlete must complete 60% of their degree program. Lastly, at the conclusion of the student-athlete’s fourth year and beyond, they must complete 80% of their degree program.

Minors/Certificates:

The NCAA has specific restrictions on minor courses and certificates. According to DI legislation credit hours earned toward a minor, both optional and required, may count towards the six credit hours per regular academic term and 18 for the academic year as long as the minor is declared before the conclusion of the fifth day of the semester. Any credits hours earned

toward a certificate may also count toward the six credit hours per academic term and 18 credit hours per academic year given: the completion of the certificate requires a minimum of nine credit hours. Enrollment in the program is available to all regular degree-seeking undergraduate students and the student declares the program on their transcript before the conclusion of the fifth day of the semester. However, credit hours earned with an **optional** or **unrequired** will not be calculated into the degree percentage requirement (40/60/80 rule) for the student-athletes degree program.

What is the GPA requirement for “Progress Towards Degree”?: The NCAA requires that Division I student-athletes earn a 1.8 minimum grade point average at the end of their first year of enrollment, 1.9 at the end of their second year of enrollment and a 2.0 at the end of their third year and beyond of enrollment in order to meet satisfactory progress towards degree. The student athlete must meet these GPA benchmarks at the end of the academic year, including summer sessions.

Repeating Courses:

The NCAA compliance staff can only count a course once if a student earns a proficient grade in that course. If a student either fails or withdraws from a course, the NCAA compliance staff would be able to count the course as progress towards degree as they did not earn a proficient grade previously.

Incomplete Grades:

The general rule of thumb with incomplete grades is that the course cannot count towards progress towards degree until a proficient grade has been posted.

Progress Towards Degree: What Counts?	
First Two Years	Virtually anything*
Beginning of Third Year	Remaining Liberal Ed. Requirements, Major and Minor** Specific Courses

Progress Towards Degree: Credit Hour Breakdown	
Per Academic Term (Fall/Spring)	6 credit hours
Per Regular Academic Year (Fall and Spring)	18 credit hours

Progress Towards Degree: Degree % Requirements	
After Freshman Year	24 Credit Hours
After Sophomore Year	40% Degree Completion
After Junior Year	60% Degree Completion
After Senior Year and Beyond	80% Degree Completion

*: Developmental/Remedial Courses can only be counted in a student-athlete’s first year of collegiate enrollment

**: If the student-athlete's major requires a minor the student-athlete can take an unlimited amount. If the student-athlete's major does not require a minor, the student-athlete can take up to six credits from their declared minor.

Tips:

- The general rule of thumb that we follow is that if the course falls onto the student-athletes DARS report, then the course will count as progress towards degree.
- In some cases, general elective courses can count towards progress degree. If a major and liberal education does not equal 120 credit hours required for graduation, we can count elective credit hours towards progress towards degree.

If you have any questions regarding progress towards degree feel free to contact Alex Carew via email or telephone at alexander.carew@bemidjistate.edu and 218-755-2142 respectively. If you have a student-athlete who wishes to withdraw from a course, please encourage the student-athlete to contact me as well. Thank you for helping our student-athletes remain compliant!