

KSU Department of Athletics

Students First

Policies

“At KSU Student-Athletes must be Students First, then Athletes.”

*Last revised January 2014 based on decisions taken at the
KSU Athletics Board meeting of November 13, 2013.*

The purpose of the policies outlined below is to clarify how the standards and procedures applicable to KSU students generally will be applied in the case of Student-Athletes. The Students First policies do not supersede university policies; they are an articulation of those policies. Any apparent conflict between these policies and university policies will be resolved in favor of the latter.

Introduction: Role and Responsibilities of the KSU Athletics Board and the AAC.

1. The KSU Athletics Board and its oversight committees are charged by the University President with developing and overseeing implementation of processes and standards to maintain the academic integrity of KSU. In the area of admissions the Athletic Board’s Admissions Advisory Committee (AAC) functions as the central gate keeper in the admissions exceptions process for student athletes, as well as serving in a key advisory role to the Athletics Board and the University President as they consider policy or process revision in the area of admissions exceptions. **Admission Categories of Prospective Student Athletes (PSAs)**

Regular Admissions - PSAs who meet or exceed the regular admission standards of the university [\[LINK TO CHART\]](#)

Type I Admission Exceptions (hereinafter “Type I Exceptions”) – PSAs who are eligible for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions expedited admission process for talented students. These are PSAs who very narrowly miss meeting the standards for regular admission, usually having only one slight deficiency in meeting those standards. For a full definition of the criteria to be eligible for expedited admission see the admissions office document “Expedited Admission Appeals Process for Talented Applicants.” [\[LINK TO DOCUMENT\]](#)

Handling notes: Type I Exceptions are exceptions, but because of their nearness to regular admission standards, do NOT count against a team's Recruitment Allowance. See sec. 2.3 below.

Type II Admission Exceptions (hereinafter "Type II Exceptions") – PSAs who do not meet the criteria for Expedited Admissions, but whose SAT/ACT scores are above Board of Regents (BOR) minimums. [[LINK TO BOR DOCUMENT](#)].

Handling notes: Type II Exceptions DO NOT have to be presented individually to the AAC, but DO count against a team's Risk Allowance. Type II Exceptions must, however, undergo review by the University Admissions Appeals Committee (UAAC) and meet all the application requirements of that committee..

Type III Admission Exception (hereinafter "Type III Exceptions") – PSAs whose SAT/ACT scores are below BOR minimums, but are NCAA qualifiers. [[LINK TO NCAA SLIDING SCALE DOC](#)]

Handling notes: Type III Exceptions must be extremely rare for any program and can enter the admission process only with the written permission of the Director of Athletics. Type III Exceptions count against a team's Risk Allowance and must be presented to the AAC by the head coach, in person. In practice, a negative recommendation by the AAC to the UAAC mean admission is extremely unlikely.

2. Team Risk and Team Risk Allowances

2.1 Individual Risk Coefficient: Every PSA presents some risk of incurring APR penalties; experience shows that the risk is significantly greater for students with lower GPAs and test scores. Using accumulated data on past and current student-athletes it is possible to quantify the risk (i.e., likelihood) that an individual PSA whose GPA and test scores are known will cost the team APR points. Taken together the Individual Risk Coefficients of all team members allow for a projection of overall team academic risk.

2.2 Team APR Risk: Each fall every team earns an APR score based on all student-athletes receiving financial aid; this score is reported to the NCAA. A team multi-year APR score of 930 (out of 1000), or lower, results in NCAA penalties. A team's APR risk then, is a measure of the likelihood of incurring such NCAA penalties. That risk increases as team's multi-year score drops close to 930, or when a very high annual score approaches the end of the five year period it impacts the crucial multi-year average (aka, roll-off hazard). Likewise, the team's APR risk decreases as a team's multi-year score rises well above 930, or as a very low score is about to roll off the multi-year (roll-off benefit). Squad size is another factor in team risk; the smaller the squad, the more dramatic the impact of one or two student's negative performance on the team

score. To provide an appropriate margin for error to assure such penalties are not incurred, a score of 940, 10 points above the NCAA threshold, is used to calculate each team's annual Recruitment Cohort Risk (see next section).

A team with an excellent multi-year APR, and whose current team members have low individual APR risk, can expect more latitude in taking on additional risk with a new cohort. Conversely, a team with a high APR risk will be permitted to take on only a minimum of additional risk in its next recruitment cohort.

2.3 Team (Recruitment Cohort) Risk Allowance: The academic aptitude and preparation of a cohort of individuals recruited to a team are the best predictor of that cohort's likely impact on the team's APR performance. Each year the University, the Athletics Department and the head coach faces the issue of how much additional academic risk the team can safely take on and still have reasonable assurance of remaining above the KSU multi-year minimum target score of 940. A team's current multi-year APR score, its squad size, and its roll-off hazard/benefit, together with the Individual Risk scores of the scholarship athletes on the team, are used to calculate how much additional risk is acceptable for the year's recruitment cohort. A Preliminary Risk Allowance score is proposed by the Risk Assessment Group (RAG) based on these factors. The Preliminary Team Risk Allowance is expressed to coaches in the form of a single whole number (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) that represents the sum of the Type II and Type III PSAs the team may include in the recruiting cohort for the year. The Preliminary Risk Allowance is vetted by the Athletics Board's Admissions Advisory Committee (AAC). Head coaches and the Director of Athletics may appeal the Preliminary Allowance to the AAC. The AAC may adjust the Risk Allowance score up or down based on these appeals as well as its own deliberations regarding qualitative factors such as team culture and a coach's past record with special admit students. Once the Risk Allowance is approved by the AAC and the Director of Athletics, it becomes an Approved Risk Allowance. Once given that allowance the coach will have considerable autonomy in determining which Type II PSAs (if any) to include in the team's cohort of recruits. So long as the head coach remains within the team's Approved Risk Allowance, the choices are her/his own.

3. The 2.55 Rule – and its Caveats

3.1 PSAs with a KSU Admissions GPA of 2.55 or above at their high school graduation, and who have met the University System of Georgia's College Preparation Curriculum (CPC) requirements are assured of admission so long as they are NCAA qualifiers. (Hereinafter "GPA" refers to KSU Admissions GPA unless otherwise indicated.) Even if the PSA does extremely poorly on one or more part of the SAT/ACT, she is assured of admission so long as she meets the

above conditions AND is an NCAA qualifier. This assurance, however, comes with caveats for both the coach and the PSA.

3.1.1 On the student side: a PSA whose test scores trigger a KSU requirement to take a placement exam and or remedial course will still have to meet those requirements just like any other student.

3.1.2 For the coaches: While a 2.55 Rule admit whose test scores would place her in the Type II (or Type III) category will not count against the current year's Team Risk Allowance, that student WILL count as a Type II (or Type III) exception in calculating the following year's allowance. Unguarded use of the 2.55 Rule category one year will likely result in a substantially reduced Risk Allowance in subsequent years.

3.2 Suspension of 2.55 permission: As part of its consideration of Team Risk the AAC may suspend a team's permission to promise admission to KSU based on the 2.55 Rule.

4. International PSAs and the Team Risk System

4.1 For international PSAs, KSU relies upon approved transcript evaluation services' projection of an "equivalent GPA." Using these equivalent scores as a stand in for the KSU GPA, the same standards and procedures (including the 2.55 rule), apply as stated above for domestic students, with the difference that non-native English speakers required to take the TOEFL are subject to the additional standards and processes described in section 4.3 below.

4.2 For PSAs from one of the few countries where the transcript evaluation services do not generate an equivalent GPA, candidates must be presented individually to the AAC for consideration and a recommendation.

4.3 International PSAs required to take the TOEFL are assigned to an admissions category (see Sect. 1 above) based on their TOEFL scores, as follows:

- *Regular Admission – Any score of 75 and above (the KSU regular admission minimum)*
- *Type I Exception – 74 to 69 (the Board of Regents minimum)*
- *Type II Exception – 68-50*
- *Type III Exception– below 50*

International PSAs assigned to these categories will be subject to the same procedures and will impact the calculation of Team Risk exactly as domestic students in the same category.

5. Support activity of the Team Risk Stat Team

5.1 Each year will see an additional cohort of Student Athletes enroll at KSU who are subject to the APR scoring system, thus increasing the number of students whose track record can be used to determine the pattern of APR risk. The APR Risk Stat Team together with the Risk Assessment Group (RAG) co-chaired by the Director of SASS and the Chair of the AAC, will annually update its statistical analysis correlating KSU Admissions GPA and SAT/ACT scores of KSU SAs with their academic success. The Stat Team and Risk Assessment Group will use this analysis to assign Individual Risk Coefficients to students with different levels of academic success. The resulting table of the various ranges of scores that correlate with different coefficients of risk will enable coaches and their SASS advisors to approximate the likely impact of a PSA on their Team Risk Allowance for that year.

6. Role for the Athletics Board and the AAC:

6.1 As noted above, the KSU Athletics Board and the AAC are charged by the University President with developing and overseeing implementation of processes and standards to maintain the academic integrity of KSU as well as to serve in a key advisory role to the Athletics Board and the University President as they consider policy or process revision in the area of admission exceptions for Student-Athletes. The AAC functions as the central gatekeeper in this process. The following are four key AAC functions in the Team Risk system:

6.1.1 The AAC reviews Type III PSAs individually and passes its recommendations on to the UAAC for its admission decision.

6.1.2 The AAC reviews the annual recruitment cohort Team Risk Allowance generated by the RAG and may adjust that allowance up or down based on qualitative factors such as team academic culture.

6.1.3 As part of its consideration of Team Risk the AAC may suspend a team's permission to promise admission to KSU based on the 2.55 Rule.

6.1.4 The AAC reviews and must approve any request for an adjustment of a Team Risk Allowance owing to extraordinary circumstances encountered after the TRA has been assigned, e.g., see Section 3 “The 2.55 rule – and Its Caveats” above.

7. Academic Probation and New Academic Performance Agreements

7.1. Whenever any scholarship student-athlete is placed on academic probation, whether that student-athlete was admitted as an Admission Exception or not, an Academic Performance Agreement must be negotiated and signed by the **(a)** student-athlete, **(b)** the head coach, **(c)** the Director of Student-Athlete Support Services, and **(d)** the Faculty Athletics Representative.

7.2. In negotiating the APA, the four signatories will give the highest priority to enabling the student-athlete to raise his/her average above a 2.0 AGPA and escaping Academic Probation. The terms of the new APA may include, but are *not* limited to, restrictions on travel, practice, and athletic participation, as well as increases in mandatory study halls, tutoring, and monitoring of attendance. All four signatories to the APA must sign the revised agreement.

7.3 Copies of the signed APA will be kept on file by the Director of SASS and made available as requested by the oversight committees of the KSU Athletics Board, or the Board itself.

8. Education of Head Coaches and their Responsibility for their Staff

8.1. Each year at approximately the same time as the annual Coaches Exam on NCAA regulations administered by the FAR, all head coaches must attend a briefing on these Students First Policies and related institutional policies to be provided by the Chair of the Athletics Board or her designee. At the conclusion of that briefing the coach must sign a statement indicating that she accepts that it is her/his responsibility (a) to know and follow these policies, and (b) to see to it that he/his Assistant Coaches and other team staff members who may be involved in recruiting do the same.

8.2 A head coach who has not completed the process described in sec. 8.1 by September 15 is forbidden to travel for recruitment purposes until the process is completed. The same prohibition applies that coaches assistant coaches and other staff who may engage in recruiting activities. It is the responsibility of the FAR to enforce this policy.

8.3 For new head coach hires close to or after September 15: Upon satisfactory completion of the NCAA Coaches Certification Test, the new coach member must complete the Student's First review and signoff within two weeks.