

**Abilene Christian University
Student-Athlete Handbook
2024-25**



Statement from the President

Congratulations on being selected as one of our esteemed student-athletes to proudly represent Abilene Christian University in NCAA Division I athletics!

For over 100 years, talented young individuals have exemplified excellence both in the classroom and on the athletic field, bringing honor to the Wildcats as they compete on the global stage. We are confident that you will uphold and carry forward this cherished tradition.

Within the ACU community, we hold high expectations for your performance, but rest assured, we are also your biggest supporters. We have no doubt that your dedication, teamwork, and achievements will make us immensely proud.

We understand the sacrifices you make, investing time and energy that others may not fully comprehend or appreciate. Nevertheless, at ACU, academics are taken seriously, and we expect you to embrace the same commitment as you strive to excel not only as a competitive student-athlete but also as a strong student. It is our aspiration that you engage in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, guided by our promise to foster a vibrant, innovative, and Christ-centered community, preparing you to make a tangible impact on the world.

Wear the Purple and White with great pride, embodying the spirit and legacy of our university. As you approach the upcoming season, know that you carry the hopes and dreams of the entire ACU family with you. Go Wildcats!

Phil Schubert, Ed.D.
President



Statement from the Vice President for Athletics

Welcome to an exhilarating season of NCAA Division I athletics at Abilene Christian University! Congratulations on proudly representing ACU; your talent and hard work have earned you a well-deserved place in our esteemed athletic program. As you embark on this journey, we are committed to fostering your holistic development, balancing excellence in both academics and athletics within our supportive community.

Our three overarching goals for you are:

1. Graduate with Excellence: Embrace the challenge of academic and athletic balance, fueling personal growth as you navigate your journey at ACU.
2. Spiritual Formation: Embrace authentic spiritual growth, enriched by our vibrant, Christ-centered community.
3. Compete for Championships: Embrace the thrill of competition, guided by dedicated coaching and unwavering fan support.

We believe in your potential to excel on and off the field. Together, let's embody the Wildcats' spirit, overcome challenges, and achieve greatness. Go Wildcats!

Zack Lassiter
Vice President for Athletics



Table of Contents

Please note that the most current contact information for our athletics department staff members can be accessed on our ACU Sports website at <https://acusports.com/staff-directory>.

Statement from the President	1
Statement from the Vice President for Athletics	1
Campus Resource Directory	5
Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)	6
Membership Requirements.....	6
Membership Selection.....	6
Officer Positions.....	6
Communications and Creative Services	7
Social Media Sites.....	7
Department of Athletics Policy.....	7
Recommendations.....	7
Dealing with Media.....	8
Dealing with The Optimist.....	8
Sports Medicine Information and Regulations	9
General Overview.....	9
Authority.....	9
Notification of Injury.....	9
Physicians.....	9
Pre-Participation Physical Examinations.....	9
Exit Physical Examinations.....	9
Training Room Regulations.....	9
Medical Insurance and Payment of Medical Bills.....	10
Primary Medical Insurance Coverage for Non-Scholarship Student-Athletes.....	10
NCAA Catastrophic Insurance Program.....	11
Coverage of Medically Related Expenses.....	11
Prescription Medications and Dietary Supplements.....	11
ADHD.....	12
ACU Concussion Management Guidelines.....	12
ACU Mental Health Management.....	13
Components of the Mental Health Emergency Action Plan.....	13
Emergency Communication.....	13
ACU Student-Athlete Drug Policy.....	14
Drug and Alcohol Education.....	14
Screening for Use of Illicit Drugs.....	15
Testing Notification and Drug Testing.....	15
Implications of Test Results for Abilene Christian University Drug Testing.....	16
First Positive Test.....	16
Second Positive Test.....	17

Third Positive Test.....	17
Appeal.....	17
NCAA Drug Testing Program Protocol.....	18
IOC/USOC and USADA Drug Testing Guidelines.....	18
Athletics Academic Office.....	19
Spiritual Formation.....	19
Academic Integrity.....	19
Academic Success.....	19
Class Attendance.....	20
Advanced Approval for Absence on a University Sponsored Event.....	20
Missed Classes.....	20
Academic Support Services.....	20
Study Hall.....	20
Accountability Tracker.....	21
Grade Checks.....	21
Tutoring.....	21
Textbook Scholarships.....	21
Electronic Devices.....	21
NCAA Academic Requirements.....	21
Grade Point Average.....	21
Full-Time Enrollment.....	22
Progress Towards Degree.....	22
Declaration of A Degree Plan.....	22
Change of Major or Concentration.....	22
Change of Course Schedule.....	22
Athletics Compliance Office.....	23
Violation of Compliance Regulations.....	23
Amateurism.....	23
Agents.....	23
Professional Sports Agent.....	23
NIL Agent.....	23
Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL).....	23
Extra Benefits.....	24
Good Sportsmanship.....	24
Ethical Conduct.....	24
Unethical Conduct.....	24
Gambling.....	25
Promotional Activities.....	25
Student-Athlete Employment.....	25
Fee-for-Lesson Instructions.....	25
Camps and Clinics.....	25
NCAA Tobacco Products Policy.....	25

Playing and Practice Limitations.....	25
In Season.....	25
Out of Season.....	26
Complimentary Admission.....	26
Hosting a Prospective Student-Athlete on an Official Visit.....	26
Outside Sports Competition.....	26
Transferring.....	26
Notification of Transfer Process.....	26
Athletic Scholarships.....	27
NCAA Student Athlete Assistance Fund.....	27
NCAA Guidelines on Athletic Aid.....	27
Reductions and Cancellations of Athletics Aid During the Scholarship Period.....	27
Renewals, Reductions, and Cancellations of Athletics Aid After the Term of the Award.....	28
Institutional Policies and Procedures.....	29
Financial Aid Appeal Policy.....	29
Appeal Committee.....	29
Appeal Procedure.....	29
Grievance Procedure.....	29
Grievance Process.....	30
Hazing Policy.....	30
Anti-Harassment Policy.....	30
Discriminatory Harassment.....	31
Sexual Harassment.....	31
Sexual Misconduct.....	31
Relationship Violence.....	31
Reporting Options.....	31
Sexual Assault Prevention.....	32

Campus Resource Directory

Below is a short list of the many resources available to students. Please visit with your Academic Coordinator, coach, or other staff member if you need help.

Resource	Ext.	Email
ACU Police	2911 or 2305	acupolice@acu.edu
Academic Advising	6770	advising@acu.edu
Academic Development Center	6400	adc@acu.edu
Campus Store	2524	campusstore@acu.edu
Career Center	2473	careers@acu.edu
Chapel	2407	chapel@acu.edu
Counseling Center	2626	counseling@acu.edu
Diversity and Inclusion		odeitimeline@acu.edu.
Housing	6321	reslife@acu.edu
Library	2316	ask@acu.libanswers.com
Medical Clinic	2625	medical@acu.edu
Office of Multicultural Affairs	6822	abn18a@acu.edu
Registrar	2300	registrar@acu.edu
Speaking Center	6839	speakingcenter@acu.edu
Student Opportunities, Advocacy, & Resources [SOAR]	2036	soar@acu.edu
Team 55: Tech Help Desk	5555 or 4357	team55@acu.edu or helpdesk@acu.edu
Title IX	6802	sherita.nickerson@acu.edu
University Access Programs	2667	
Alpha Scholars	2699	eab16b@acu.edu
Excel Tutoring	2517	nls12a@acu.edu
Supplemental Instruction [SI]	2919	kaitlynd.satterfield@acu.edu
University Testing Center	2548	acutesting@acu.edu
Wildcat Central Student Services	2300	wildcatcentral@acu.edu
Writing Center	4833	writingcenter@acu.edu

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) is a prestigious leadership group that fosters collaboration between teams, administration, and the ACU community. Composed of student-athletes from each sport, SAAC represents and addresses the interests, concerns, and well-being of ACU student-athletes. Through active participation in committees and community initiatives, SAAC enhances leadership abilities, influences policies, and fosters unity within the athletics department and Abilene Christian University as a whole.

Membership Requirements

All SAAC members must meet the full-time student criteria set by NCAA regulations and be an active member of an athletic team at ACU. Furthermore, they must adhere to the principles of conduct expected of ACU student-athletes. This includes representing themselves, the team, the Department, and the University in a positive manner that enhances their reputation. Members are also expected to abide by team rules, uphold sportsmanship and ethical standards outlined in the student-athlete handbook, and maintain proper academic eligibility.

Membership Selection

SAAC representatives are approved by the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) after compilation from the SAAC chair in collaboration with the academic staff and head coach of each team. This collaborative process ensures that the selected representatives effectively represent their respective teams and fulfill the responsibilities of SAAC membership. The selection process should be completed in a timely manner to allow for a smooth transition and effective participation in SAAC activities. It is required that each team has a minimum of one representative to ensure active engagement and representation across all athletic teams.

Officer Positions

The SAAC members will have the opportunity to apply for positions on the Executive Board through an application process. The applications will be reviewed and approved by the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) and the SAAC Chair. The selected individuals will then serve in the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Spiritual Formation Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator
- Community Engagement Coordinator

Communications and Creative Services

This section is dedicated to promoting responsible social media use and proper dealings with the media. As representatives of ACU's athletic program, it is crucial to maintain Christ-like behavior, integrity, and dignity on social media platforms. We expect student-athletes to exercise caution, ensure compliance with university rules, and refrain from sharing sensitive information. By upholding these standards, we can collectively uphold the integrity and positive reputation of ACU Athletics. Thank you for your commitment to being exemplary ambassadors of our university both online and offline.

Social Media Sites

Internet social media sites provide individuals with an opportunity to interact with friends and colleagues while being exposed to a largely unrestricted consortium of new social interactions. However, it is important to note that postings on personal profiles, groups, and chat rooms are in the public domain and easily accessible by anyone, including reporters, parents, coaches, predators, employers, graduate school admissions officials, and others. Once information is posted, it can be retrieved easily by computer-savvy individuals, even after it has been deleted.

Department of Athletics Policy

Participation in intercollegiate athletics at Abilene Christian University is a privilege, not a right. Student-athletes are expected to maintain and demonstrate behavior at all times that represents the highest level of Christ-like behavior, integrity, honesty, good sportsmanship, character, and dignity, which clearly characterize participation in intercollegiate athletics at Abilene Christian University. While the Department of Athletics does not prohibit student-athlete involvement with social media communities, these high standards encompass comments and postings (written or pictorial) made to these sites. As a condition of participation, student-athletes are required to provide the athletic department with unconditional access to all social media accounts.

The Department of Athletics reserves the right to take action against any currently enrolled student-athlete, any person receiving athletically related aid, or any person part of an official support group engaged in behavior that is deemed unacceptable or inappropriate, or violates NCAA, university, department, or team rules, including such behavior that occurs on social media or internet sites. This action may include education, counseling, suspension or termination from the team, and reduction or non-renewal of any athletically related aid.

Recommendations

The safest and most unambiguous way to prevent embarrassing scenarios and likely punitive consequences is to refrain from overusing social media sites. However, should you choose to participate, you should ensure any comments and/or postings are consistent with university, department, and team rules, and they present you in a manner that meets these expectations. For your safety and privacy, refrain from posting and promptly remove any personally identifiable information such as telephone numbers, addresses, class schedules, places frequented, as well as any photos you may have posted. If you come across sites that falsely appear to be yours, alert the Athletic Department, as this could constitute identity theft, and the university will assist your efforts to have the offensive material and/or site removed.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are these sites contributing to your team and school's image, enhancing or hurting your reputation?
- If the local media starts surfing around, will they find images or posts that would embarrass you or your team?
- If discovered, would these sites and/or postings result in consequences (i.e., team suspension, removal from the team, loss of scholarship) detrimental to you and/or your team?
- Would these postings violate team, department, or university policy? Not knowing is not an excuse!
- If a potential employer starts surfing around, could it cost you a job after college?
- Do you realize that you can be held legally accountable for what you might post about others online?

Things to remember:

- You are an ambassador of Abilene Christian University and are always in the public eye. Do not post information or images online that would embarrass you, your team, or ACU.
- Never share financial, personal, and sensitive information.
- What you post about others is just as important as what you post about yourself!
- Never post any inappropriate visual content, as it can only lead to damaged reputations, unwanted attention, and lasting negative and severe consequences.
- Information posted on the internet can never be entirely erased!
- Know who you are associating with and accept friend requests wisely. Befriending strangers online is not a good or safe idea.
- You may not have control over what others post about you, but you do have control over the behavior you demonstrate that may lead to unwanted or embarrassing postings.

Dealing with Media

It is the policy of ACU Athletics for all media requests for administrators, coaches, or student-athletes to go through the ACU Athletics Media Relations office. The media relations office will set up requested interviews, both face-to-face and telephone interviews. ACU Athletics Media Relations policy is not to give out contact information (cell phone numbers or email addresses) for any administrator, coach, or student-athlete to anyone in the media. If an administrator, coach, or student-athlete is contacted by a journalist (professional or student) without first gaining the necessary permission from the media relations office, please redirect the journalist to the media relations staff.

Dealing with The Optimist

At all times, the reporters/journalists for The Optimist are looking for stories just as much as professional journalists. You might see them in class or on campus, but don't freely share information that pertains to your team, your teammates, injuries, etc. The Optimist and its journalists are to be treated the same way you would treat a professional journalist. In many cases, the journalists at The Optimist are more aware of what's going on within our teams than local newspaper or TV reporters, so be careful what you say. It could be the next headline or social media topic.

Sports Medicine Information and Regulations

General Overview

Medical coverage is provided to all student-athletes by full-time licensed athletic trainers, licensed graduate assistant athletic trainers and athletic training students. Medical care is coordinated through the athletic trainers in conjunction with local licensed physicians specializing in their respective field.

As defined by the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), Athletic Trainers are healthcare professionals who render service or treatment, under the direction of or in collaboration with a physician, in accordance with their education and training and the states' statutes, rules and regulations. As a part of the healthcare team, services provided by athletic trainers include injury and illness prevention, wellness promotion and education, emergent care, examination and clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions. ACU operates with multiple athletic training rooms and hours may vary depending on sport season and program needs. Please see your athletic trainer for special hours and treatment care.

Authority

A member of the medical staff has the unchallengeable authority to determine medical management and return-to-play decisions of student-athletes, including the authority to cancel or modify a practice or workout of an individual student-athlete or an entire team, for health and/or safety reasons, including inclement weather.

Notification of Injury

Each student-athlete is required to notify the athletic trainer assigned to his/her sport of any injury or illness that is directly related to athletic participation or injuries or illnesses that could affect athletic participation. All expenses incurred from physician appointments NOT coordinated with the medical staff will be paid for by the student-athlete. If a bill is incurred without the knowledge and/or permission of the medical staff, the athletic department will assume financial responsibility only if acceptable justification is provided.

Physicians

The athletics department retains several qualified physicians who are specialists in various medical conditions including sports injuries. Injured student-athletes will be examined and treated by the designated team physicians.

Pre-Participation Physical Examinations

Each student-athlete must complete a pre-participation physical examination with the medical staff and receive approval to participate by a team physician before he/she may participate in any practice/competition activity and/or check out equipment. The athletic trainers will assist in scheduling these appointments with the team physicians. The medical staff may re-examine any student-athlete and change their participation status at any time.

Exit Physical Examinations

Following the conclusion of their final intercollegiate season, each student-athlete must complete an exit physical examination by the medical staff. Any and all healthcare concerns should be discussed with the medical staff at that time. According to NCAA and ACU Athletics Policy, payment for follow-up medical examinations, treatment, and/or procedures will be provided by ACU Athletics according to the medical billing policy for up to (2) years following the end of eligibility.

Training Room Regulations

The Athletic Training Room will be open at 1:00 p.m. for treatments, practice preparation, and rehabilitation during the fall and spring semesters. The training room will also be open from 8-11 a.m. This time is to be used for consultations, evaluations and pre-arranged treatments.

All athletes who need treatment or taping should be present at the training room at the times indicated below. If you are not present at the appropriate time for your sport, we will assume you are able and ready to practice that day. (1 hour before practice for all sports except football; Football 1 1/2 hour before position meetings or at least 1 1/2 hour before practice.)

Following the end of regularly scheduled practice, there will be a 45-minute post practice treatment time. All athletes should be showered before attending these treatments.

Report every injury or blister, no matter how trivial it may seem to you. Do not treat yourself; wait until an Athletic Trainer can help you.

- Come to the training room dressed in shorts or appropriate attire for treatment or taping.
- Please remove all shoes before entering the training room.
- No athlete is to operate or help him or herself to any training room equipment.
- Do not remove supplies or equipment from the training room.
- Wait your turn! Everyone has somewhere to be, but we cannot help everyone at once.
- Do not come to the training room just to visit with your friends.
- You are responsible for all special equipment issued to you. If it is not returned, you will be held accountable for its replacement.
- DO NOT USE PROFANITY OR OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN THE TRAINING ROOM.
- No food or drink or tobacco product will be permitted in the training room.

Medical Insurance and Payment of Medical Bills

All student-athletes and practice players must provide proof of primary insurance coverage at the beginning of the academic school year and maintain insurance coverage for the entire time the student-athlete or practice player is participating in an intercollegiate sport at ACU. ACU Sports Medicine has worked through many different primary medical insurance companies, and through this process we have had to restrict the types and companies we allow student-athletes to use as primary insurance. The first restriction is regarding group medical share companies as a form of primary insurance. The companies have not been able to pay for medical bills as a primary insurance, and payments have been seriously delayed in processing. Therefore, ACU Athletics will no longer accept group medical share plans as primary insurance. Here is a list of some of the group medical share plans: Medi-Share; Samaritan Ministries; Christian Healthcare Ministries; Liberty Healthshare; Sedera. Secondly, we can no longer allow Kaiser Permanente insurance to act as primary medical insurance for ACU student-athletes.

The insurance plan used by the ACU Athletic Department is designed to be used as secondary insurance to each student-athlete's personal primary medical insurance coverage. This policy only covers those injuries incurred during participation in activities related to participation with the sport.

ACU will be the secondary carrier in all approved claims. If any portion is not covered by the student-athlete's personal insurance, then ACU will pay the balance. To assist the student-athlete in paying for medical expenses not related to intercollegiate athletics, the student-athlete should be encouraged to enroll in some form of personal health insurance program if his/her parents do not have a policy in effect. Contact your athletic trainer to assist with any questions you may have regarding this.

Primary Medical Insurance Coverage for Non-Scholarship Student-Athletes

Non-scholarship student-athletes and practice players must provide proof of primary insurance coverage at the beginning of the academic school year and maintain insurance coverage for the entire time the student-athlete or practice player is participating in an intercollegiate sport at ACU. This insurance policy must cover student-athletes or practice players for injuries sustained while participating in intercollegiate athletics. Insurance claims for injuries sustained while participating in an intercollegiate sports sponsored activity, such as a scheduled practice or competition, will be filed with the student-athletes or practice player's primary insurance carrier. ACU will act as a secondary insurance carrier, paying the amount due after the primary insurance carrier has processed all claims for said injury.

Once the primary insurance company responds to the claim with a denial or payment, you (or your parents) must forward to the sports medicine staff:

- A copy of all bills

- The insurance company's Explanation of Benefits (EOB), which details the amount of their payment for the claim. The athletic medicine staff then processes these bills for payment.
- Please forward all subsequent bills, and/or reminders of payment of outstanding bills, to your team's athletic trainer.

Questions or concerns regarding medical claims can be presented to the medical staff which includes the team's Athletic Trainer, Director of Sports Medicine, and/or Medical Claims Coordinator. Additionally, correspondence with the student-athlete and/or parent(s) of the student-athlete may occur from the medical staff regarding any concerns related to maintaining an appropriate level of primary medical insurance and/or medical claims questions.

NCAA Catastrophic Insurance Program

The NCAA sponsors a Catastrophic Injury Insurance Program that covers the student-athlete who is catastrophically injured while participating in authorized, organized or sponsored NCAA events, including practice and competition. The student-athlete is eligible for up to \$ 20 million in lifetime benefits. The plans cover not only medical care but also disability payments, home modification and rehabilitation. It also features a death benefit. The policy has a \$90,000 deductible and provides benefits in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance. For more details, refer to the NCAA web site at www.ncaa.org.

Coverage of Medically Related Expenses

Injuries/Illness during Sport Participation. ACU Athletics will pay those injuries and/or illness incurred while participating as an active student-athlete and according to the ACU Athletics medical billing process. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to inform the ACU Athletics Medical Staff of any new injuries or illnesses as soon as possible. The student-athlete should not seek outside medical attention for athletic related injury or illness without the notification and approval from the medical staff UNLESS the injury or illness is a medical emergency. In emergent situations, it is recommended that the student-athlete attempt to notify the medical staff of the injury or illness as soon as reasonably possible.

Second Medical Opinion/Outside Referral Policy. After receiving an initial diagnosis by a physician retained by the athletic department, a student-athlete may request a second medical opinion from a physician of their choice, other than the one originally retained by athletic department. Second opinion visits to physicians, specialists or other services related to injury or illness care (chiropractic, massage therapy, physical therapy, etc.) will only be covered by ACU Athletics if approved by the ACU Athletics Medical Staff. Should a student-athlete choose medical services from providers other than those retained by ACU, the student-athlete and his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be solely responsible for any and all charges incurred if approved by the ACU Medical Staff prior to the outside consultation.

- Diagnostic Testing – Diagnostic testing (e.g. x-ray, CT, MRI) will only be covered by ACU if approved and arranged by the ACU Athletics Medical Staff.
- Pre-existing Medical Condition – ACU Athletics may not assume responsibility for pre-existing medical conditions. Treatment and medication for such conditions may only be covered as deemed appropriate by ACU Athletics Team Physicians
- Out of Season Injury –ACU Athletics may not assume responsibility for the care of injuries or illnesses incurred when the student-athlete is not actively engaged in a sanctioned sport activity (eg., practice, competition, sport training activity)
- End of Eligibility Coverage - ACU will pay for medical treatment after your athletics eligibility expires or after you are no longer a member of the team only if it is for follow-up treatment related to an earlier injury caused during athletics participation.

Prescription Medications and Dietary Supplements

Prescription medication must be prescribed by a physician. Only over-the-counter medication may be distributed without the direction of a physician. The student-athletes must be advised prior to taking any medication to ensure that it does not cause a health concern or contain a substance banned by the NCAA or Conference.

ADHD

If you have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD and are taking medication to treat it, the ACU Athletic Department must gather information and have it on file **BEFORE** you take this medication. Many of these medications are on the NCAA and Conference banned substance list and steps must be taken to allow you to use this medication without jeopardizing your eligibility. Please contact the staff athletic trainer for your sport for additional information and directions on how to best handle this matter.

Dietary supplements that are sold over the counter and through the internet may contain substances banned by the NCAA and Conference. Please contact your athletic trainer prior to taking any dietary supplements to verify the contents.

ACU Concussion Management Guidelines

- A. ACU requires student-athletes to sign a statement in which student-athletes accept the responsibility for reporting their injuries and illnesses to the sports medicine staff, including signs and symptoms of concussions. During the review and signing process, student-athletes will be provided with educational material on concussions.
- B. ACU will have on file and annually update an emergency action plan for each athletics venue to respond to student-athletes' catastrophic injuries and illnesses, including but not limited to concussions, heat illness, spine injury, cardiac arrest, respiratory distress (e.g. asthma), and sickle cell trait collapses. All athletics healthcare providers and coaches shall review and practice the plan annually. These sessions will be conducted prior to the start of the sport season. Concussion training will occur annually through a portal from the risk management department through the university
- C. ACU sports medicine staff members shall be empowered to determine management and return-to-play of any ill or injured student-athlete, as he or she deems appropriate. Conflicts or concerns will be forwarded to Cory Driskill (Associate AD for Sports Performance) and Chad Ezzell, MD (Head Team Physician) for remediation.
- D. ACU shall have on file a written team physician-directed concussion management plan that specifically outlines the roles of athletics healthcare staff (e.g., physician, certified athletic trainer, physician assistant). ACU annually reviews concussion management protocols with the guidelines outlined by the NCAA. In addition, the following components have been specifically identified for the collegiate environment:
 - ACU coaches will receive a copy of the concussion management plan and a fact sheet on concussions in sport. The ACU compliance office will maintain a list of staff that has completed the requirement on file.
 - ACU sports medicine staff members and other athletics healthcare providers will practice within the standards as established for their professional practice (e.g., team physician, certified athletic trainer, physician assistant).
 - ACU shall record a baseline assessment using the Impact test for each student-athlete in the sports of baseball, basketball, football, pole vaulting, soccer, softball, and volleyball at a minimum. In addition, a baseline assessment will be recorded for student-athletes with a known history of concussion. The same baseline assessment tools should be used post-injury at appropriate time intervals. The baseline assessment should consist of the use of: 1) symptoms checklist, 2) standardized balance assessment (BESS) and 3) neuropsychological testing (computerized IMPACT test). Neuropsychological testing has been shown to be effective in the evaluation and management of concussion and has proven to be an effective tool in assessing neurocognitive changes following concussion and can serve as an important component of an institution's concussion management plan. However, neuropsychological tests should not be used as a standalone measure to diagnose the presence or absence of a concussion as ACU uses a multi-faceted assessment by its sports medicine staff to make these decisions.
 - When a student-athlete shows any signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, the athlete will be removed from practice or competition, by either a member of the coaching staff or sports medicine staff. If removed by a coaching staff member, the coach will refer the student-athlete for evaluation by a member of the sports medicine staff. During competitions, on-the-field-of-play injuries will be under the purview of the official and playing rules of the sport. ACU staff will follow such rules and attend to medical situations as they arise. Visiting sport team members evaluated by ACU sports medicine staff will be managed in the same manner as ACU student-athletes.

- A student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion will be withheld from the competition or practice and not return to activity for the remainder of that day. Student-athletes that sustain a concussion outside of their sport will be managed in the same manner as those sustained during sport activity.
 - The student-athlete will receive serial monitoring for deterioration. Athletes will be provided with written home instructions upon discharge; preferably with a roommate, guardian, or someone that can follow the instructions.
 - The student-athlete will be monitored for recurrence of symptoms both from physical exertion and also mental exertion, such as reading, phone texting, computer games, watching film, athletic meetings, working on a computer, classroom work, or taking a test. Academic advisors and professors will be notified of a student-athlete's concussion, with permission for release of information from the student-athlete.
 - The student-athlete will be evaluated by a team physician as outlined within the concussion management plan. Once asymptomatic and post-exertion assessments are within normal baseline limits, return to play shall follow a medically supervised stepwise process.
 - Final authority for Return-to-Play shall reside with the team physician or the physician's designee as noted in the concussion management flowchart.
- E. ACU will document the incident, evaluation, continued management, and clearance of the student-athlete with a concussion.
- F. Athletics staff, student-athletes and officials will continue to emphasize that purposeful or flagrant head or neck contact in any sport should not be permitted.

ACU Mental Health Management

Emergency mental health related incidents may arise at any time. Expedient action must be taken in order to provide the best possible care to the student-athlete(s) involved. The development and implementation of an emergency action plan will help ensure that the best care will be provided. This preparation involves formulation of an emergency plan, utilization of appropriate emergency medical personnel, and continuing education in the area of mental health emergency responding. Hopefully, through careful pre-participation physical and mental health screenings, adequate medical coverage, proactive education and interventions, and active referrals of student-athletes with mental health issues, some potential emergencies may be avoided. However, proper preparation on the part of the sports medicine team should enable each mental health issue, regardless of severity, to be treated and managed appropriately with all the appropriate parties informed and working together. Our goal is to manage these situations with compassion, effective communication and as much privacy and confidentiality as the situation allows (Compassion, Communication & Confidentiality).

Components of the Mental Health Emergency Action Plan

Part 1: Involved Personnel

Part 2: Mental Health Screening

Part 3: Mental Health Referrals

Part 4: Mental Health Crisis & the Mental Health Incident Management Team

Mental health screening (Part 2) outlines the protocol for the athletic department's proactive approach for early identification and treatment of mental health issues. Mental health referrals (Part 3) outlines the protocol for the ongoing process of identification and referrals. The final part of this document (Part 4), outlines the protocol for action regarding Mental Health Crisis & the Mental Health Incident Management Team.

Emergency Communication

Communication is the key to quick emergency response. Athletic trainers and emergency medical personnel must work together to provide the best emergency response capability and should have contact information established as a part of pre-planning for emergency situations. Communication prior to the event is a good way to establish boundaries and to build rapport between both groups of professionals. Program appropriate numbers into your phone, have your cell phone on you and be prepared should a mental health emergency arise.

ACU Student-Athlete Drug Policy

The Abilene Christian University (“University”) Department of Athletics requires that each student-athlete (hereinafter defined) comply with the NCAA and University policies regarding substance use/abuse. The Department of Athletics is concerned with the health, safety and welfare of its student-athletes. Substance use/abuse is one of the most important issues facing athletics and society today. The use of illegal drugs, misuse of legal drugs and dietary supplements, use of performance-enhancing substances, are inconsistent with the standards expected of student-athletes at Abilene Christian University. Substance use/abuse in sport can pose risks to the student-athlete’s health and negatively affect his/her academic and athletic performance. Additionally, substance use/abuse can compromise the integrity of athletic competition and the ideals of Abilene Christian University. This Abilene Christian University Department of Athletics Student-Athlete Drug and Alcohol Policy (“Policy”) was developed to ensure the safety and quality of athletics at the University. The University Director of Sports Medicine and/or his designee shall coordinate this Policy.

This Policy represents the Abilene Christian University policy on substance use/abuse and testing. Each student-athlete is also subject to the NCAA testing programs, which are separate and distinct from this Policy. Sanctions imposed for violations of the NCAA testing programs are also separate and distinct from this Policy, and it is the responsibility of the student-athlete to ensure they are in compliance with all such policies. Attached to this Policy is Abilene Christian University Student-Athlete Acknowledgement of Drug-Testing Sanctions Consent, which details the sanctions relative to the separate programs. PLEASE NOTE, the NCAA SANCTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME WITHOUT NOTICE. Additional information regarding the NCAA substance abuse programs and policies may be found on their respective websites.

This Policy does not represent a contract between the student-athlete and the University, and is subject to change at any time without notice to the student-athlete. For the purposes of this Policy, “student-athlete” shall mean any University student who participates in any Abilene Christian University Department of Athletics sanctioned NCAA sporting event and/or practice.

Drug and Alcohol Education

Student-athletes will be provided with information regarding the use of illegal substances, misuse of alcohol and the dangers of using reputedly performance-enhancing substances such as anabolic steroids and nutritional supplements. The education program will draw upon the specialized skill of University personnel as well as resources outside the University to inform student-athletes concerning the physical and psychological consequences of drug use and abuse.

The Abilene Christian University Drug and Alcohol Policy and administration procedures will be provided to each student-athlete at pre-season annual team meetings or within their dedicated pre- season paperwork.

The Associate AD of Sports Performance, along with the Sports Medicine staff, will provide an educational session to all athletic teams regarding the Policy. Included in such sessions are discussions on nutritional supplements and their risks. The drug and alcohol educational sessions will be presented based on a team’s practice and competition schedule. Each student-athlete shall be required to attend at least one educational session during the academic year.

A University Drug Testing Informed Consent form stating that the student-athlete has read this Policy and program statement, and has agreed to participate in the program will be required of each student-athlete prior to participation in any athletic program. Participation in Abilene Christian University athletics is a privilege and no student-athlete will be permitted to participate in any athletic program until he/she has executed and returned the following documents to the Director of Sports Medicine or his designee:

Student-athletes are encouraged to utilize campus counseling services and are made aware of health and safety, alcohol and other drug guidelines by the Sports Medicine staff, coaches, and the Compliance Services Department. Student-athletes are encouraged to utilize resources provided by the Sports Medicine staff and Compliance staff

during pre-participation physicals and a series of educational sessions provided each semester. Coaches are also educated by the Sports Medicine staff in their ability to play an important role in identification and appropriate referral of student-athletes with health and safety concerns.

Screening for Use of Illicit Drugs

All student-athletes will be subject to random testing throughout the academic year and summer. Additionally, any student-athlete may be required to be tested if a member of the athletic staff, having an opportunity to observe the student-athlete's behavior, physical condition or performance, concludes that there is reasonable cause to suspect drug usage.

All student-athletes in post-season competition may be tested for drug usage before competition. Additionally, the University reserves the right to team test any time and will require all student-athletes who have tested positive to be re-tested prior to a return from a participation suspension. By signing the Drug Testing Informed Consent, the student-athlete agrees that any test result may be released to the Director of Athletics, Associate AD for Compliance & Student Services/SWA, Associate AD for Sports Medicine, Head Coach, and/or any designee.

Testing Notification and Drug Testing

Upon selection for testing, student-athletes will be notified by direct phone contact or face to face prior to testing by the University Director of Athletics or his/her designee, the student-athlete's coach, Sports Medicine Staff, or a member of the University athletics administration. Notification will take place no more than 48 hours before the scheduled test. Upon notification, the student-athlete will be asked to read and sign an Abilene Christian University Drug Policy Notification Form notifying him/her of the date, time, and site of the testing as well as any other special instructions pertinent to the test. The student-athlete will be instructed to report to the test site with a picture ID. If a student-athlete does not report at the scheduled time for his/her test, he/she will be sanctioned appropriately for his/her action. A "no show" will be interpreted as a positive test result and the student-athlete may be subject to penalties and sanctions at the discretion of the Director of Athletics. The student athlete will also be able, at the time of the test, to produce a viable sample for collection. If a student cannot produce an adequate sample this could be interpreted as a positive test and will be subject to additional testing and possibly further procedures. This is to be determined on a case by case basis. If the student athlete provides a dilute sample upon reporting to the test, he/she will have no more than three attempts to provide a sample that is viable to test.

The drug screening process may include analysis of, but is not limited to, the NCAA Banned Drug List (Appendix 1). For an ongoing updated listing of the NCAA Banned-Drug Classes List view the NCAA's web site at www.ncaa.org. Please note, the University reserves the right to test for substances not listed on the NCAA list of banned substances and may test at lower cut-off levels than the NCAA testing program. The Abilene Christian University Athletic Department requires that all student-athletes keep the athletic training staff and/or the Director of Sports Medicine aware of any prescribed drugs and nutritional supplements that he/she may be taking.

Notification of Results. An off-campus contracted provider will communicate the results of the tests to the Associate AD for Sports Performance and/or his designee. If a drug test is positive, the Associate AD for Sports Performance and/or his designee will then notify the student-athlete and any other party as described in this Policy of such result. All results will be kept confidential.

Self-Referral. Any student-athlete may refer himself/herself for evaluation or counseling by contacting a member of the coaching staff, University Sports Medicine Department, or an Athletics Department administrator and enter into the *Safe Harbor Program*. At the beginning of each sports competition season, the Associate AD for Sports Performance will conduct a meeting with each sport and distribute information regarding the safe harbor program to each SA. This self-referral will be held strictly confidential and no University administrative sanctions will be imposed upon the student-athlete who has made a personal decision to seek professional assistance. A treatment plan will be put into place and the student-athlete will not be sanctioned for entry. A student-athlete testing positive after entering this program will be subject to the applicable sanctions. A student athlete will not qualify for this program if they report after being notified that they are subject to a drug test or 12 hours prior to drug testing notification.

Implications of Test Results for Abilene Christian University Drug Testing

Any student-athlete testing positive for an anabolic agent and/or a performance enhancing substance or any substance used to mask the use of the previously mentioned will be immediately suspended from competition and practice for the period of one year. Additionally, the Director of Athletics and/or his/her designee may suspend or permanently dismiss any student-athlete that tests positive for a drug or abuses alcohol that is determined to be detrimental to the health and safety of the student-athlete, other student-athletes, or athletic department personnel, on a case by case basis.

The Head Coach may have team policy regarding substance abuse that affects a student-athlete’s eligibility for practice or competition. Such team policies may be more stringent, but cannot be more lenient than outlined in the policy.

The Student Athlete drug and alcohol policy sanctions will remain in effect for the entirety of the Student Athlete’s eligibility at ACU. Under no circumstances do the sanctions reset while the athlete is eligible at ACU.

Test Result	Sanction
First Positive	Notification of results, Mandatory confidential meeting(s) with designated counselor, Notification of results to parents/legal guardians.
Second Positive	Notification of results, Mandatory confidential meeting(s) with designated counselor, Notification of results to parents/legal guardians, Immediate suspension for next 10% of a team’s regular-scheduled competitions.
Third Positive	Upon notification of results immediate and permanent suspension with loss of financial aid

First Positive Test

Notification of the results will be made to the designated University counselor, the student-athlete, the Associate AD of Sports Performance and/or his designee, the Director of Athletics, Director for Compliance, SWA, the appropriate sport administrator, the appropriate head coach, and the immediate supervisor for Sports Medicine. The student-athlete will be notified by the Director of Athletics or appropriate sport administrator or the head coach as to terms of action. The student-athlete will be required to have a confidential meeting(s) with the designated drug treatment and rehabilitation counselor. Appropriate counseling and/or treatment will be determined and provided by the counselor. Student Athletes will be automatically placed on the next institutional drug test until he/she tests negative. Once again, the student-athlete must call his/her parents/legal guardians as indicated above.

Any student-athlete who has a result of positive will be required to:

- A. Call his/her parents/legal guardian in the presence of the head coach, position coach, or the athletic trainer to notify them of the test result.

- B. Head Coach or Athletic Trainer will be responsible for setting up mandatory counseling sessions with designated drug counselors at ACU Medical and Counseling Care Center.
- C. Head coach/Athletic Trainer will keep records of athlete attendance to counseling sessions and report to the Director of Sports Medicine.

If a Student Athlete fails to attend any mandatory counseling sessions, barring extenuating circumstances, (i.e. death in the family, car accident, etc.) sanctions under the second positive test may be administered by the Associate AD for Sports Performance, director of compliance and director of athletics.

Second Positive Test

Notification of the results will be made to the designated University counselor, the student-athlete, the Associate AD for Sports Performance, and/or his designee, the Director of Athletics, Associate Athletic Director for Compliance, Director for Compliance, SWA, the appropriate sport administrator, the appropriate head coach, and the immediate supervisor for Sports Medicine. The student-athlete will be notified by the Director of Athletics or appropriate sport administrator or the head coach as to terms of action. The Head Coach can notify the student athlete of an immediate suspension from the next 10% of a team's scheduled competition. The student-athlete will be required to have a confidential meeting(s) with the designated drug treatment and rehabilitation counselor. Appropriate counseling and/or treatment will be determined and provided by the counselor. Also, the student-athlete will be required to provide a negative sample during his/her suspension in order to return to participation. Once again, the student-athlete must call his/her parents/legal guardians as indicated above.

Third Positive Test

Notification of the results will be made to the designated University counselor, the student-athlete, the Associate AD for Sports Performance and/or his designee, the Director of Athletics, Associate Athletic Director for Compliance, Director for Compliance, SWA, the appropriate sport administrator, the team physician, the appropriate head coach, and the immediate supervisor of Sports Medicine as outlined above. The student-athlete will be notified in writing that he/she will be immediately and permanently suspended from all athletics participation with loss of financial aid.

Appeal

Within 24 hours of receipt of notification the student-athlete may request in writing that the Director of Athletics convene a meeting with the Associate AD for Sports Performance, Director for Compliance, the appropriate sport administrator, appropriate head coach, and the immediate supervisor of Sports Medicine to present reasons why the sanction should not be imposed or should be modified. At the conclusion of the meeting, unless the Director of Athletics determines otherwise, the period of suspension will begin immediately.

Within three (3) days of receipt of the notification of any pending sanction from the Director of Athletics, the student-athlete may appeal the sanction to a committee composed of the Chair and four other members of the General Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee.

Within seven (7) days of receipt of the written request for an appeal, the Chair of the General Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee will convene a hearing at which time the student-athlete will have an opportunity to be heard and present evidence concerning the reported test results and the impending sanction. The student athlete may request to have the "B" sample tested at the same laboratory that tested the "A" sample. The student-athlete may be accompanied at the hearing by an attorney and/or other person of his or her choice who may act as an advisor. The student athlete's representatives may confer jointly, but will not be permitted to address the Committee.

The Chair of the General Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee will give written notification to the student-athlete and the Director of Athletics of the decision of the Committee. The Committee's decision will be final.

NOTICE: These sanctions are those of ACU Athletics and are not associated with the sanctions given as the result of NCAA testing.

NCAA Drug Testing Program Protocol

Drug screening will be administered pursuant to the guidelines set forth in the NCAA Drug Testing Program. Drug testing legislation can be found in the Division I manual and on the NCAA Web Page at www.ncaa.org. Prior to participation, each student-athlete will be required to sign a NCAA Drug Testing Consent Form which will be administered by the Compliance staff.

Per NCAA rules, any positive:

1. If tested before competition, will result in the student-athlete being disqualified from competition and the loss of one (1) year of eligibility.
2. If tested during or after competition, will result in a team penalty (which may include disqualification from and/or forfeiture of competition), and the loss of one (1) year of eligibility for the student-athlete.

IOC/USOC and USADA Drug Testing Guidelines

1. Please be advised that all student-athletes involved in competition sanctioned by some other National Governing Body (NGB) must acknowledge that:
2. Medication prescribed by your physician, and approved for use by the NCAA, may contain substances prohibited by your sanctioned NGB.
3. Over-the-counter medications may contain substances prohibited by your sanctioned NGB.
4. Vitamin, herbal, and nutritional supplements purchased over-the-counter or via the internet may contain substances prohibited by your sanctioned NGB.

Always check with the Associate AD for Sports Performance and/or his/her designee prior to using any supplement or medication. Student-athletes should not take any medications or supplements unless it is approved by their respective athletic trainer. However, there is no guarantee that a supplement approved by an athletic trainer or Team Physician does NOT contain a contaminant or unlisted prohibited substance that could create a positive drug test.

NCAA policy states that any prohibited substance discovered on a drug test is the responsibility of the student-athlete. If the substance is determined to have come from a contaminated supplement, penalties will still apply to that student-athlete. Therefore, all student-athletes are cautioned against ingesting any supplements other than those approved by the athletics department.

Athletics Academic Office

This section is dedicated to the academic support provided to student-athletes. The athletic academic staff collaborates with on-campus resources to provide comprehensive support, enhancing academic and personal achievements. We encourage personal responsibility, intelligent decision-making, and leadership skills both in and out of the classroom. Our mission is to ensure every student-athlete successfully completes their degree, contributing to the university's Graduation Rate and Academic Progress Rate through continuous evaluation. Let's work together to make your academic and athletic journey a success!

Spiritual Formation

At Abilene Christian University, every student must earn spiritual formation credits in each long semester. You are expected to attend chapel regularly, with the exception of days when you participate in a university-sponsored event. Failure to earn these credits may lead to Chapel Probation in the following semester. Repeated Chapel Probations may result in removal from the institution. For more information on the university's chapel policy, please refer to the [ACU Student Handbook](#).

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is defined as academic work completed as assigned for each class by the individual or group responsible for the work. We expect all student-athletes to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and avoid any form of academic dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Claiming credit for attendance or service activities without participation.
- Unauthorized observation of other students' work.
- Accessing or disseminating exam content before its scheduled time.
- Using or providing unauthorized aid during exams or assignments.
- Selling or buying unauthorized aids or information.
- Colluding on assignments meant for individual work.
- Submitting work completed by someone else as your own.
- Misrepresenting or falsifying academic records.
- Presenting falsified materials or research results.

Plagiarism, which includes not giving proper credit to sources used in your work, is also strictly prohibited. Please refer to the [ACU Academic Integrity Policy](#) for detailed information. Any violation of the academic integrity policy may lead to removal from the team and/or the cancellation of athletic aid.

Academic Success

Attending classes is essential for academic success and we expect all student-athletes to attend every class session diligently. While we understand that team travel may cause occasional conflicts with class schedules, it is your responsibility to communicate with your professors in advance and make arrangements to cover missed content.

To achieve academic success, we encourage you to:

- Arrive early for class, participate actively, and be attentive throughout.
- Make use of available campus resources to reach your academic goals.
- Regularly consult with your Academic Coordinator about your academics.
- Engage proactively with your academic advisor.
- Commit to completing 15 credit hours per long semester to stay on track for graduation.
- Understand your NCAA eligibility and its relation to your academic progress.
- Comply with institutional policies on academic integrity.
- Pursue the goal of obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

Class Attendance

ACU expects student-athletes to miss class only during team travel. Missing class for other reasons may lead to removal from the team or loss of athletic aid. Practice or workout conflicts do not excuse class attendance. Advanced approval is required for absences related to university-sponsored events, with specific limits on allowable missed classes. Students must attend at least 75% of class meetings, or they risk receiving an "F" grade. Even excused absences for university-sponsored events count toward attendance calculations. Absences exceeding the course limit may result in a Withdraw Fail (WF) grade.

Course Meeting Days	# Absences allowed for Travel
Monday, Wednesday, Friday (MWF)	9
Tuesday, Thursday (TR)	6
Once a week courses (Labs, evening courses, etc.)	3

Advanced Approval for Absence on a University Sponsored Event

As a student-athlete, any absence from class due to travel with your sport is considered a university sponsored event. According to university policy, you are permitted to miss a specific number of classes for such travel. However, it is your responsibility to keep track of your absences in each course and communicate with your professor about any missed periods. If you are not scheduled to travel with the team or if your travel plans change at the last minute, attending class is mandatory.

Missed Classes

It is essential to proactively communicate with professors about any anticipated absences, including missed assignments and tests. Faculty members are generally willing to accommodate student-athletes when appropriate arrangements are made in advance for "excused" activities. Professors typically provide their contact information on the course syllabus, enabling easy communication before the missed class.

In the event of illness, it is crucial to promptly inform the professor about your condition and the possibility of visiting Sports Medicine for evaluation. Seeking health evaluation from the trainers helps determine the severity of illness and facilitates necessary diagnosis and treatment. Remember, all student-athletes are required to visit an Athletic Trainer if missing class due to illness. Failure to comply may lead to removal from the team and/or loss of athletic aid.

In case of emergencies, it is imperative to immediately contact the professor, coach, and academic staff, providing detailed information about the circumstances surrounding the absence. Timely communication ensures that appropriate measures can be taken to address the situation effectively.

Academic Support Services

As a student-athlete, it is crucial to take ownership of your academic journey by actively engaging with your Academic Coordinator. Open communication will ensure you receive the necessary support and resources to excel both on the field and in your studies.

Study Hall

Student-athletes may be assigned to task-based study hall sessions. The specific requirements for study hall will be communicated at the beginning of the semester by the sport's Academic Coordinator. Failure to complete assigned tasks in any given week may result in removal from the team and/or cancellation of athletic aid.

Study Hall takes place in the Moody Academic Center (or another location predetermined by your Academic Coordinator). Upon arrival and departure, student-athletes must check-in and check-out. Any student who disrupts or gets distracted during study hall will be dismissed and reported on the Accountability Tracker, which is shared with their respective coach.

Accountability Tracker

The academic staff will utilize the Accountability Tracker to assist coaches in accurately monitoring the academic progress of their student-athletes. This tracker will identify those who do not meet the listed academic success and integrity criteria mentioned above. Consistent flagging of student-athletes on the Accountability Tracker may lead to their removal from the team and/or the cancellation of athletic aid.

Grade Checks

The academic staff will have a Canvas Observer Role for each student's account, allowing them to closely monitor your progress. Grade checks will be conducted on a weekly, bi-weekly, or as-needed basis to assess your performance and provide timely support. Additionally, progress reports will be sent to all course professors at least three times per long semester. The progress report will assess the student's current grade, classroom participation level, number of absences, and any other relevant factors that will provide the Academic Coordinator with a comprehensive view of the student's academic progress in each course.

Tutoring

Upon request, tutoring is available to any student-athlete enrolled in a general education course at ACU. Student-athletes eligible for the Alpha Scholarship Program are encouraged to make full use of those resources, including requesting a tutor. For students who do not qualify for Alpha services, they can work with the academic staff to plan for individual or group tutoring.

Textbook Scholarships

If you are receiving athletic aid to pay for your course textbooks, then you are considered to be on a book scholarship. The academic staff will purchase only required materials that are listed on your course syllabus.

Residential Students. Student-athletes will be contacted by the academic staff with information on how to pick up textbooks at the University Gear Shop.

Online Students. Student-athletes will be contacted by the academic staff to purchase their course materials. Please provide your mailing address and a copy of the syllabus.

If a student-athlete purchases a course material with their own money, it will not be reimbursed by the athletic department. All books must be returned at the end of the semester before departure from campus. Textbooks not returned or returned with damage will be charged to the student's account, and the student will be responsible for paying the charge.

Electronic Devices

A limited supply of iPads, calculators, and laptops is available for checkout. Priority will be given to student-athletes who demonstrate financial need, are in-season, and/or require the materials listed on a course syllabus. Throughout the semester, student-athletes are responsible for keeping track of their devices and maintaining them in usable working condition. At the end of every semester, all devices must be returned. Failure to return devices or returning them in worse condition will result in charges to the student-athlete's account, which must be paid before the start of the next semester.

NCAA Academic Requirements

The NCAA and university have strict rules and regulations in place regarding student-athlete eligibility, ensuring academic performance, progress towards degrees, and maintaining specific GPA requirements. Compliance with these guidelines is crucial to uphold the balance between athletics and academics for student-athletes.

Grade Point Average

All ACU students must maintain a term GPA and cumulative GPA above 2.0 to avoid Academic Probation or Suspension by the university.

As student-athletes, you have an additional cumulative GPA requirement set by the NCAA:

- 1.8 by the start of your sophomore year
- 1.9 by the start of your junior year
- 2.0 by the start of your senior year; this GPA must be maintained until graduation

To graduate with a degree from ACU, the minimum required cumulative GPA is 2.0. However, please be aware that certain majors may have higher GPA requirements. Failing to meet these requirements may result in the need to change your major, as determined by the department. It is your responsibility to know the required GPA for your major and to maintain it at all times.

Full-Time Enrollment

Throughout each long term of enrollment, student-athletes must remain enrolled full-time, except during the last semester before graduation.

Progress Towards Degree

Per NCAA Bylaw 14.4, student-athletes are required to make continuous progress toward their degree, meeting specific GPA and credit hour rules each semester and academic year (see chart below).

NCAA REQUIREMENTS			
Entering 2nd Year of Enrollment	Entering 3rd Year of Enrollment	Entering 4th Year of Enrollment	Entering 5th Year of Enrollment
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 semester credits <input type="checkbox"/> 18 credits earned during academic year <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of GPA for graduation (certify term by term) <input type="checkbox"/> 6 credits/term <input type="checkbox"/> 9 credits/fall (MFB)	<input type="checkbox"/> 40% of degree requirements <input type="checkbox"/> 18 credits earned during academic year <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of GPA for graduation (certify term by term) <input type="checkbox"/> 6 credits/term <input type="checkbox"/> 9 credits/fall (MFB)	<input type="checkbox"/> 60% of degree requirements <input type="checkbox"/> 18 credit earned during academic year <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of GPA for graduation (certify term by term) <input type="checkbox"/> 6 credits/term <input type="checkbox"/> 9 credits/fall (MFB)	<input type="checkbox"/> 80% of degree requirements <input type="checkbox"/> 18 credit earned during academic year <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of GPA for graduation (certify term by term) <input type="checkbox"/> 6 credits/term <input type="checkbox"/> 9 credits/fall (MFB)

Declaration of A Degree Plan

Before the third year of enrollment (fifth semester), all student-athletes must declare a program of study leading to a specific bachelor's degree. To officially declare your major, schedule a meeting with your Academic Coordinator to discuss your degree plan. Once approved, visit Wildcat Central advising to make the official declaration.

Change of Major or Concentration

Should you wish to change your major, you must first meet with your Academic Coordinator to discuss the purpose behind the change, its impact on your athletic eligibility and graduation timeline, and review your degree progress.

Change of Course Schedule

Before withdrawing from a course or making any changes to your schedule (e.g. adding/dropping a course), you are required to contact your Academic Coordinator to discuss potential effects on your NCAA or academic status. Failure to do so may render you ineligible to practice or compete in your sport. Additionally, please note that certain classes, as listed, cannot be withdrawn from by full-time undergraduate students:

- BIBL 101
- ENGL 003/004, 106/006, 107/007
- MATW 019
- UNIV 011

University policies regarding adding and dropping classes, including charges and/or refunds, may be found in the online [ACU catalog](#).

Athletics Compliance Office

This section is dedicated to the compliance support provided to student-athletes. The Athletics Compliance Office works diligently to uphold NCAA rules and regulations, ensuring eligibility, amateurism, and fair play. We collaborate with on-campus and external resources to provide comprehensive support, guiding student-athletes in making informed decisions and maintaining compliance with all NCAA guidelines. Our mission is to foster personal responsibility, ethical conduct, and integrity, both on and off the field, to ensure a successful academic and athletic journey for every student-athlete. Together, we strive to uphold the university's commitment to academic progress and compliance excellence. Let's work hand-in-hand to achieve your goals and create a thriving athletic experience.

Violation of Compliance Regulations

If a student-athlete is aware of or suspects any type of violation, the student-athlete should immediately contact a member of the Compliance Office.

Amateurism

Maintaining your amateur status and eligibility is crucial. To avoid losing your eligibility, refrain from:

- Using your athletic skill (directly or indirectly) for pay in any form in a sport including but not limited to endorsing a commercial product/service.
- Accepting promises of pay or financial assistance from pro sports organizations.
- Allowing others to market your athletic ability to pro teams.
- Enter into an agreement (even for future representation) or accept any benefits from an agent.

Agents

Student-athletes need to be aware of the regulations regarding agents to maintain their eligibility.

Professional Sports Agent

Agreeing, orally or in writing, to be represented by an agent, now or in the future, will result in permanent ineligibility for competition, practice, and athletics aid. If a student-athlete or their family/friends receive benefits from an agent, such as free tickets or meals, they will also become ineligible. In Texas, agents (and advisors in certain cases) must register with the state and can only initiate contact with student-athletes on designated days or through mail. It's important to note that some individuals who refer to themselves as "advisors" may still be considered agents under NCAA rules and/or Texas law. The professional governing body of the sport, like the National Football League Players Association, may have its own set of rules and requirements for agents.

NIL Agent

NCAA rules have evolved to allow student-athletes to work with NIL agents without jeopardizing their eligibility. These agents can assist student-athletes in exploring and securing opportunities related to their NIL rights, such as endorsements and sponsorships. However, it is essential to ensure that these agents are compliant with all NCAA regulations and state laws. Student-athletes should stay informed about the guidelines in place and work with reputable NIL agents to make the most of these new opportunities while safeguarding their eligibility.

Please inform the Compliance Office of any contacts initiated by you or an agent.

Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)

Student-athletes now have the opportunity to enter into contractual agreements with individuals or entities, as permitted by NCAA rules and Texas State Law. Before finalizing any contract, student-athletes must disclose the proposed agreement to ACU and obtain approval from the Athletics Office of Compliance at least 5 days in advance of the activity for evaluation of permissibility. While there are new possibilities, certain limitations on compensation apply. Student-athletes cannot enter into contracts that conflict with team contracts, institutional policies, athletic department policies, or ACU's honor code. Compensation is also prohibited if provided in

exchange for athletic performance or endorsement of specific products, including alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, anabolic steroids, sports betting, firearms, or sexually oriented businesses.

Any benefits received outside of NIL contractual agreements will be considered extra benefits and can jeopardize NCAA athletics eligibility. While student-athletes can hire agents for NIL activities, these agents cannot represent or market them for professional athlete career activities.

Extra Benefits

Student-athletes are prohibited from receiving benefits from an employee of ACU or a representative of athletics interest (fans/alumni/boosters). These benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Use of a car
- Gifts
- Money
- Tickets for any kind for entertainment
- Free or reduced cost room and/or board
- Meal at a restaurant
- Special discounts
- Payment arrangements or credit on a purchase

Accepting anything of tangible value from boosters or representatives of athletics interest requires prior approval from the head coach and the compliance office. If you receive an offer of benefits, seek guidance from your head coach or compliance coordinator before accepting (always ask before you accept).

Good Sportsmanship

Abilene Christian University upholds the highest standards of sportsmanship for its student-athletes and will not condone any of the following behaviors:

- Physically abusing officials, coaches, athletes, opponents, or spectators.
- Using obscene or inappropriate language or gestures towards officials, opponents, teammates, or spectators.
- Making negative, controversial, or non-compliant public statements regarding media relations, as outlined in the department's policy.
- Violating generally recognized intercollegiate athletics standards associated with ACU, as determined by the head coach and approved by the director of athletics.

Our commitment to good sportsmanship aligns with NCAA Bylaw, Article 10 - Ethical Conduct, serving as the guiding principle for our expectations in this regard.

Ethical Conduct

Ethical conduct refers to the expected behavior of all student-athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics. It entails upholding honesty and sportsmanship, thereby representing the honor and dignity of fair play and the high standards associated with competitive sports.

Unethical Conduct

Unethical conduct refers to actions that breach the principles of integrity and fairness in intercollegiate athletics. Such conduct may encompass refusing to cooperate with investigations, involvement in fraudulent academic practices, offering improper inducements or benefits, providing false information, receiving benefits for arranging meetings with agents, supplying banned substances, misrepresenting academic or amateur status, or engaging in any deceptive practices during academic examinations or athletics competitions.

Gambling

Participating in any form of sports wagering, including placing, accepting, or soliciting bets on any youth, intercollegiate, amateur, or professional sporting event, is strictly prohibited. Consequences for engaging in such activities include a one-year suspension, loss of one season of eligibility, potential loss of scholarship, expulsion from school, and being declared permanently ineligible to compete at ACU. For more information, visit the NCAA Sports Wagering [website](#).

Promotional Activities

The university or recognized entities, such as student organizations or nonprofit agencies, may use a student-athlete's name, picture, or appearance to support charitable or educational activities related to their participation in intercollegiate athletics, as long as the following conditions are met:

- The student-athlete does not miss class.
- The activity does not involve non-permissible sponsorship.
- The proceeds from the activity directly benefit the nonprofit agency.
- The student-athlete does not endorse or promote any commercial product or service.

Student-Athlete Employment

Before beginning any employment, student-athletes must register the employment details with the head coach and compliance office. Access the required employment forms in ARMS. Student-athletes can earn money from employment regardless of their financial aid or scholarship amount, but they must be compensated for the work performed at a rate comparable to similar services.

Fee-for-Lesson Instructions

Student-athletes may offer fee-for-lesson sport skills instruction, but they cannot use ACU facilities or provide playing lessons. Compensation should be received from the person taking the lesson or their family member, and no promotional use of name, picture, or appearance is permitted.

Camps and Clinics

Student-athletes employed in sports camps or clinics must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Duties should primarily involve general supervisory responsibilities, in addition to any coaching or officiating tasks.
- Compensation must align with the going rate for camp counselors.
- Student-athletes who solely lecture or demonstrate at the camp/clinic may not receive compensation for their appearance.
- Student-athletes with remaining eligibility are not allowed to conduct their own camps or clinics.

NCAA Tobacco Products Policy

Tobacco product use is strictly prohibited for student-athletes and all game personnel, including coaches, trainers, managers, and game officials, during both practice and competition in all sports. Uniform penalties will be established for violations, as determined by the relevant rules-making and sports committees with enforcement responsibilities.

Playing and Practice Limitations

To ensure compliance with playing and practice limitations, the Compliance Office collaborates with SAAC representatives who verify practice hours using the logging system as a check and balance monitoring tool. Student-athletes are responsible for reviewing and addressing any discrepancies in reported hours.

In Season

A team that is "in-season" shall not participate in team-related activities for more than 20 hours per week and 4 hours per day (24-hour period). Student-athletes should be provided one "off-day" per week during which no

team-related activities are required. During vacation periods and between academic terms when classes are not in session, there are no weekly or daily hour limitations.

Out of Season

A team that is “out-of-season” shall not participate in team-related activities for more than 8 hours per week and 4 hours per day (24-hour period). Each week can consist of up to 4 hours of skill instruction. Student-athletes should be provided two “off-days” per week during which no team-related activities are required. During vacation periods and between academic terms when classes are not in session, it is not permissible to have required team-related activities.

Complimentary Admission

Complimentary admissions are a privilege, not a right, and student-athletes must adhere to policies to maintain this privilege. Each student-athlete may receive up to four complimentary admissions for guests through a pass list per contest in their sport and up to six admissions during postseason contests. The number of actual admissions may be less depending on availability. Guests must present valid identification and student-athletes are prohibited from selling or exchanging admissions for any value. Complimentary admissions should not be provided to agents or unrelated high school coaches. To request admissions, student-athletes must remain eligible under NCAA and ACU rules, meet specified deadlines, and submit guest information accordingly.

Hosting a Prospective Student-Athlete on an Official Visit

As a student host for official visits at Abilene Christian University, your role is crucial in the recruiting process. It is essential to understand and strictly adhere to all NCAA, Conference, and institutional regulations. Ensure you provide a positive and welcoming experience for the visiting prospective student-athletes, while also maintaining integrity and compliance with the guidelines. Keep in mind that only one student-athlete can serve as a host per day and no cash gifts are allowed for the prospects or their companions. Additionally, you should not provide or arrange vehicles for the prospects and any recreational activities should not be designed to test their athletic abilities. Engage in uplifting and acceptable entertainment, such as sports games, movies, and dining experiences, while avoiding any compromising situations involving alcohol or drugs. By following these guidelines, you contribute to a successful and ethical recruiting process for our university's athletic program.

Outside Sports Competition

During the academic year, student-athletes are not allowed to participate as members of any outside team in non-collegiate, amateur competitions, as doing so will lead to the loss of eligibility. However, individual participation in outside competitions is permitted, provided they represent themselves and not as members of or receive expenses from an outside team. Prior approval from the Compliance Office is necessary for any outside competition participation. It is important to note that student-athletes may accept prize money for their performance in athletics events during the calendar year, as long as the prize money covers only actual and necessary expenses and is provided solely by the event sponsor.

Transferring

Student-athletes considering a transfer should consult the Compliance Office for guidance on eligibility and be aware that certain services and benefits may no longer be available to them after completing the written notification process. These include academic support services, athletic facility use, medical and rehabilitation services, early class registration, team awards, team-issued apparel, equipment, and possible cancellation of athletic aid.

Notification of Transfer Process

To transfer from ACU, student-athletes must contact the Compliance Office to enter the NCAA Transfer Portal. No communication with another institution is allowed until the written notification process is complete. The student-athlete must submit their written notification of transfer using the official institutional form found in ARMS. The Compliance Office will inform the Head Coach of the student-athlete's decision. Once the student-athlete is entered into the NCAA Transfer Portal, they will receive a confirmation email within two business

days. If the student-athlete wishes to withdraw their name from the Transfer Portal, they must notify the Compliance Office in writing. It is important to note that engaging in impermissible recruiting contacts with another institution may result in the student-athlete becoming ineligible to represent that institution in intercollegiate athletics.

Athletic Scholarships

Athletics aid is awarded at the discretion of the coaching staff and administration. These scholarship awards may be provided to student-athletes with remaining eligibility or former student-athletes attempting to complete a degree. However, please note that post-eligibility aid is not guaranteed and an application process is involved.

NCAA Student Athlete Assistance Fund

The NCAA Special Assistance Fund (SAF) is available to support student-athletes with various necessary expenses. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Clothing
- Medical expenses (excluding those covered by another insurance program)
- Hearing aids
- Vision therapy
- Off-campus psychological counseling
- Travel expenses for parents or student-athletes related to family emergencies
- Purchase of expendable academic course supplies that are required for all students enrolled in the course (e.g. notebooks, pens, and rental fees for computers and cameras)

NCAA Guidelines on Athletic Aid

It is essential that all aid is disclosed to and administered by ACU. The NCAA imposes restrictions on the amount of aid that student-athletes can receive. Financial aid and scholarships for student-athletes are limited to the cost of attendance, as long as they do not conflict with any accounting towards NCAA team limitations. If a student-athlete receives an award that would surpass the NCAA limits, they will be required to either relinquish the award or have their athletics scholarship reduced accordingly.

The following expenses are not covered by an athletic scholarship:

- Parking permits and fines
- Mailbox rental
- ID replacement fees
- Damage fees
- Library fines
- Schedule change fees
- Medical services (except for those related to sport injuries)

If a student-athlete has any questions regarding whether a particular charge is covered by their scholarship, they must contact the Compliance Office as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of student-athletes to ensure their account balances are accurate before the end of the semester and that all charges have been settled. Starting the next semester, athletics aid will not be applied to any previous term.

All athletic scholarships are awarded directly to students' ACU student accounts. Students who receive cost-of-attendance and/or off-campus living stipends must set up direct deposit through the Accounts Payable Office to receive their funds.

Reductions and Cancellations of Athletics Aid During the Scholarship Period

During the scholarship period, athletic scholarships, which may vary in length and amounts, are outlined in the athletic aid agreement. Any aid beyond the agreed terms is not guaranteed. ACU Athletics reserves the right to cancel or reduce an athletics scholarship if the student-athlete voluntarily quits the team, violates department policies or team rules, becomes ineligible for competition, fraudulently misrepresented information, or engages in

serious misconduct. If such a situation arises, the student-athlete will be notified through their ACU email account by the Financial Aid Office and will have the right to appeal to an independent committee following the procedures outlined in the handbook.

Renewals, Reductions, and Cancellations of Athletics Aid After the Term of the Award

After the scholarship agreement's period ends, NCAA rules allow the head coach to renew, reduce, or cancel aid for any reason. By July 1 following the previous scholarship period, ACU will notify student-athletes in writing about the renewal, reduction, or cancellation of athletics aid. If aid is renewed, a new agreement will be sent for signing. If aid is reduced or not renewed, and the student-athlete has remaining eligibility, they will be informed by the Financial Aid Office. All reduction and cancellation notices are sent via email, and student-athletes have the right to appeal to an independent committee, as outlined in this handbook.

Institutional Policies and Procedures

This section is dedicated to essential policies that promote the safety and well-being of our student-athletes. By upholding these guidelines, we create a supportive environment that promotes academic and personal success. Let's work together to ensure a positive and enriching experience for all student-athletes in our community.

Financial Aid Appeal Policy

The University shall have a student-athlete appeal hearing procedure as required by the NCAA Division I Manual (Bylaw 15.3.2.3). These procedures shall be followed for appeals regarding the reduction, cancelation, or non-renewal of athletically related financial aid. A student-athlete can appeal a decision by completing the Student-Athlete Financial Aid Appeal form in ARMS within ten (10) business days of notification regarding the reduction, cancelation, or non-renewal of athletically related financial aid.

Appeal Committee

The Student-Athlete Appeal Committee will be composed of faculty and staff from various university departments. Employees of the Department of Athletics are not eligible to be a voting member on the committee but can serve in ex-officio roles as allowed by the NCAA manual. The committee will consist of five (5) voting members at each formal hearing, including a representative from Student Financial Services and the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR).

Appeal Procedure

The student-athlete will be notified in writing about the reduction, cancelation, or non-renewal of athletically related financial aid. The student-athlete will have ten (10) business days from the date of notification to fill out the Student-Athlete Financial Aid Appeal form in ARMS and submit any additional documents that are applicable to the appeal. Upon submission, the athletic department and/or coaching staff will provide a statement and submit any additional documents that are applicable to the appeal.

The Athletics Compliance Office will send these documents to two (2) members of the committee who will engage in an informal hearing of the student-athlete's appeal request. During this informal hearing, the two (2) committee members will independently review the appeal and determine if a formal hearing should be conducted. Additional information may be requested prior to making a decision.

If the two (2) members agree that the reduction, cancelation, or non-renewal was within the guidelines established by NCAA legislation, a formal hearing will not be granted and the appeal will be denied. Denial of the appeal will be sent in writing to the student-athlete.

If the two (2) members differ in their informal review of the documentation submitted, or both believe the matter should be heard before the full committee, the appeal will move to a formal hearing. The student-athlete will be notified in writing of the decision to conduct a formal hearing. Within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the appeal, the informal and formal hearings will be conducted. The written results will be provided to the student-athlete, Department of Athletics, and Student Financial Services.

Grievance Procedure

Abilene Christian University Department of Athletics is dedicated to handling all complaints or grievances in a fair and equitable manner, ensuring the well-being of all parties involved. When a student-athlete wishes to submit a complaint or grievance regarding another student-athlete, coach, athletics department staff member, faculty member, or any other university employee, the circumstances surrounding the grievance may vary. Depending on the nature and sensitivity of the complaint, the student-athlete may choose to initiate the grievance process within the athletics department or with another campus department or authority, utilizing the [ACU Student Complaint Policy](#). ACU Athletics encourages its student-athletes to speak up whenever they feel they have been treated unfairly. The student-athlete should follow the grievance process outlined below.

Furthermore, if a coach or any other ACU staff member receives a complaint or grievance from a student-athlete, they are responsible for treating it seriously and maintaining confidentiality as much as possible. It is essential to note that certain complaints, such as those involving sexual harassment, must be immediately reported to supervisors and the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) as required by law and institutional policy. Retaliation against any person for reporting a grievance or participating in the complaint process is strictly prohibited. Such retaliation is considered a serious violation of this policy and may lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Grievance Process

Step 1: Whenever possible, a student-athlete should attempt to resolve the issue directly with the other person(s) involved. If the complaint pertains to sexual harassment, it must be reported directly to the Title IX coordinator immediately at 674-2353.

Step 2: If the student-athlete cannot reach a satisfactory resolution through direct interaction or is uncomfortable doing so for any reason, the student-athlete should report the grievance to the Head Coach and the Sport Administrator overseeing the student-athlete's sport. If the grievance involves the Head Coach, the student-athlete should report it to the Sport Administrator.

For academic issues involving problems with a faculty member, tutor, or the Academic Coordinator, the student-athlete may initiate the grievance process with their Academic Coordinator. If the grievance involves the Academic Coordinator, the student-athlete may initiate the process with the Head Coach or Sport Administrator.

Step 3: If the issue remains unresolved or the student-athlete is uncomfortable initiating the grievance process with the individuals mentioned in Step 2, the student-athlete may report the grievance to the Director of Athletics or the Faculty Athletics Representative.

Step 4: If a resolution cannot be reached through the internal mechanisms outlined above or if these mechanisms are not appropriate for the situation, the student-athlete (or any party involved in the particular grievance matter) should seek assistance from the ACU Office of the Provost. If a resolution still cannot be achieved at this level, the ACU Office of the Provost will refer the matter to the appropriate entities.

Hazing Policy

ACU maintains a strict stance against hazing, both as defined by Texas law and any conduct that degrades, intimidates, humiliates, or endangers individuals. The university reserves the right to define behavior as "hazing" for administrative disciplinary purposes, regardless of whether it falls under the legal definition in Texas. Any acts of hazing or violations of ACU's Student Handbook will be met with appropriate discipline, including dismissal from the university, without exemption due to ignorance of Christian principles, cultural meanings, or Texas law.

"Hazing" is characterized as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student, either individually or in collaboration with others, on or off-campus, with the purpose of endangering the mental or physical health or safety of the student in the context of pledging, initiation, affiliation, or membership in any student organization. This includes various forms of physical brutality, physical activities that subject the student to unreasonable risk or harm, consumption of harmful substances, and activities causing extreme mental stress. Any incident of hazing will be thoroughly investigated and may result in suspension from teams, loss of athletic scholarships, or expulsion from the ACU Athletic Program. For additional information about the Hazing Policy and how to report hazing violations, please refer to the [ACU Hazing Policy](#) posted on the ACU Dean of Students website.

Anti-Harassment Policy

At ACU Athletics, the safety and well-being of all student-athletes are of utmost importance. We treat every report of harassment with the utmost seriousness. For additional information about the Anti-Harassment Policy and reporting options, please refer to the [Anti-Harassment Policy](#) posted on the ACU Dean of Students website.

Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassment refers to any harmful action based on an individual's sex, religion, race, age, color, national origin, veteran's status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such conduct may unreasonably interfere with an individual's work or educational performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment encompasses unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This includes sexual misconduct, exploitation, stalking, or relationship violence. Sexual harassment can occur between individuals of any gender, regardless of their relationship or positions at the university.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct covers a range of non-consensual physical contact of a sexual nature, varying in severity and scope.

Relationship Violence

Relationship violence includes domestic and dating violence. Domestic violence refers to violent offenses committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner, a person with whom the victim shares a child, or a cohabiting partner. Dating violence involves abuse or threats from a person with whom the victim has had a romantic or intimate relationship, determined by the nature, duration, and frequency of interaction.

Reporting Options

In case of experiencing any form of harassment, the university strongly encourages individuals to seek immediate assistance and promptly report the incident. This not only safeguards their own physical and emotional well-being but also helps protect others. It's essential to be aware that different individuals on campus have varying responsibilities upon receiving a report.

Direct Reporting to Anti-Harassment Co-Coordinators. Reports can be made directly to one of the two Anti-Harassment Co-Coordinator, whose information is listed below, or a Deputy Coordinator. For compliance purposes, these Co-Coordinators are the Title IX Coordinators for staff/faculty and students respectively.

Wendy Jones Director of Human Resources ADM, Room 213 325-674-2359 wendy.jones@acu.edu	Sherita Nickerson Title IX Coordinator 1626 Campus Court 325-674-6802 sherita.nickerson@acu.edu
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Anonymous Reporting. Anonymous reports can be submitted online or by calling the anonymous hotline at 325-674-2594. The information will be received by the ACU Office of General Counsel, which oversees the hotline, and will then be provided to one of the Co-Coordinators.

Confidential Reporting. If an individual wants to identify themselves but wishes to keep the incident details confidential from the Co-Coordinators, they are encouraged to speak with one of the following: on-campus student advocates, off-campus mental health professionals or health care service providers, off-campus rape crisis resources, or off-campus clergy.

Reporting to Responsible Employees. All university employees, except student advocates and certain health care professionals, are considered "responsible employees." If they receive reports of harassment, they must promptly share the information with the appropriate Co-Coordinator, who can consider requests to maintain the reporter's confidentiality.

Sexual Assault Prevention

Sexual violence, including sexual assault, harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence, is a pervasive issue affecting individuals at all levels of society, including institutions of higher education and their athletics programs. It is a serious public health concern that demands a comprehensive response.

Federal law mandates that colleges and universities provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for students to pursue their academic, athletic, recreational, and social interests. The NCAA constitution also reinforces these requirements for member schools. Ensuring a safe campus environment is the responsibility of all staff and departments within the campus community.

Within athletics, it is crucial to prioritize the safety, health, and well-being of current and prospective student-athletes. Athletics holds a unique position to promote a healthy and safe culture, leveraging the influential relationships shared by student-athletes, coaches, and athletics staff.

We strongly encourage all prospective and current student-athletes to participate in on-campus training, seminars, and workshops that educate and empower them to make wise and safe decisions. Educational programming may include orientation activities, team meetings, national awareness months, team building activities, brochures, and email newsletters.

Successful sexual assault prevention necessitates the commitment of student-athletes to treat all individuals with respect, dignity, and concern for their welfare. Sexual violence inflicts a significant toll on victims, their families, and society. Unfortunately, girls and women are disproportionately victimized, but sexual violence affects individuals of all genders. Athletics has a responsibility to foster culture change and promote campus safety by holding all members of the athletics department accountable for campus safety. With its prominent voice, visibility, and influence, athletics can play a vital role in creating safe campuses for all students.