



Office of Internal Audit

October 12, 2020

Mr. Scott Farmer, Director of Athletics
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin
4901 E. University Boulevard
Odessa, Texas 79762

Dear Mr. Farmer:

We have completed our audit of athletics eligibility as included in our approved FY 2020 audit plan. The purpose of our audit was to determine if the University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB) is complying with NCAA rules regarding student athlete eligibility.

We conducted our audit in accordance with guidelines set forth in UTS129, the Institute of Internal Auditors' *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, and *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)* as issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Overall, we found that UTPB is complying with NCAA rules regarding student athlete eligibility, and eligibility determinations made by the Athletics Department were verified and supported. However, some opportunities exist for improvement in the documentation of eligibility in student athlete files. For additional detail, please refer to the attached audit report.

We express our appreciation to the management and staff of the UTPB Athletics Department for the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during this audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn S. Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Glenn Spencer, CPA, CGMA
Chief Audit Executive

The University of Texas Permian Basin



Athletics Eligibility – FY 2020

August 2020

**Office of Internal Audit
4901 E. University Boulevard
Odessa, Texas 79762**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Objective	3
Scope and Methodology	3
Risk Ranking Criteria	4
Audit Results	4
Prior Findings and Recommendations	6
Conclusion	6
Appendix A – Report Distribution List	7

Executive Summary

We have completed our audit regarding athletics eligibility as included in the FY 2020 audit plan. The purpose of this audit was to determine if the University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB) is complying with NCAA rules regarding student-athlete eligibility. The audit covered all university sports. The period reviewed was Fall 2019 and Spring 2020.

Risk Level	Finding
High	Opportunities exist for improvement in the documentation of eligibility in student-athlete files

Objective
The objective of our audit was to determine if UTPB is complying with NCAA rules regarding student-athlete eligibility

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Based upon our sample of student-athlete files, NCAA rules regarding student-athlete eligibility are being complied with, and eligibility determinations made by the Athletics Department were verified and supported. However, opportunities exist for improvement in the documentation of eligibility in student-athlete files.

Scope and Methodology

The scope covered the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters, and included the following procedures:

- Gained an understanding of the student-athlete eligibility process through reading NCAA rules and guidance, and UTPB Athletic Compliance Handbook
- Reviewed a sample of 40 student-athlete files
- Reviewed the following categories of eligibility: general eligibility information, initial eligibility information, continual eligibility information, and transfer eligibility information
- Reviewed student statements, drug testing acknowledgement forms, NCAA Eligibility Center final certifications, mid-year eligibility assessments, year-end eligibility assessments, and transfer documentation

Our audit was conducted in accordance with guidelines set forth in UTS 129; with the Institute of Internal Auditors' *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*; and with *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)* as issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Risk Ranking Criteria

Risk Level	Definition
PRIORITY	An issue or condition, if not addressed immediately, has a high probability to directly impact achievement of a strategic or important operational objective of UT Permian Basin or UT System as a whole.
HIGH	Risk that is considered to be substantially undesirable and results in a medium to high probability of significant adverse effects to UT Permian Basin either as a whole or at the college/department/unit level.
MEDIUM	Risk that is considered undesirable and has a low to medium probability of adverse effects to UT Permian Basin either as a whole or at the college/department/unit level. Without appropriate controls, the risk will occur some of the time.
LOW	Considered to have minimal probability of adverse effects to the UT institution either as a whole or at the college/ school/unit level. Even with no controls, the exposure to UT Permian Basin will be minimal.

Audit Results

Overall, we found that UTPB is complying with NCAA rules regarding student-athlete eligibility, and eligibility determinations made by the Athletics Department were verified and supported. However, some opportunities exist for improvement in the documentation of eligibility in student-athlete files.

Finding: Opportunities exist for improvement in the documentation of eligibility in student-athlete files

Assessed Level of Risk: High

In order to provide an extra level of assurance of eligibility for each prospective student-athlete - by individuals outside the Athletics Department - the Athletics Compliance Manual requires additional review and verification of eligibility by the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) and the Registrar. Additionally, Admissions is to determine, when applicable, the transferability of credits earned prior to enrollment at UT Permian Basin and transfer grade point average. We reviewed 40 student-athlete files and noted that improvement can be made in the documentation of eligibility in student-athlete files:

- A. There is insufficient documentation in the student-athlete files that the FAR has reviewed and verified each athlete’s eligibility. The Athletics Compliance Manual, page 15, states: “The FAR, in conjunction with the ACO, will verify initial eligibility of freshmen and transfer S-As as well as verify the term-by-term credit hour requirements for continuing S-As with regards to progress toward degree.” However, 26 of the assessments were not signed by the FAR to indicate that they had been reviewed and verified.

While several emails were sent from the FAR to the Athletics Department stating that he had reviewed and verified eligibility for entire teams or groups of athletes, there should be evidence in each athlete's file that the FAR has reviewed and verified that specific athlete's eligibility with a signed eligibility assessment form.

- B. The Registrar did not review and verify any athlete's eligibility. The Athletics Compliance Manual, page 16, states: "The Office of the Registrar will verify the eligibility checklist at the start of each academic year. The Office of the Registrar will account for the following:

- Academic standing,
- Fulltime enrollment,
- Designation of degree,
- Grade Point Average, and
- Term-by-term credit hours earned."

- C. NCAA Eligibility Center eligibility certifications were not documented in 18 student-athlete files. We subsequently reviewed the data online to verify those eligibility determinations.
- D. Additional documentation was missing in student-athlete files: three did not contain a completed/signed student statement; one did not contain the NCAA drug testing form; and three did not contain the UTPB drug testing form.

Recommendation

The FAR and the Registrar should review and verify each athlete's eligibility as indicated in the Athletics Compliance Manual. Evidence of each athlete's verification should be documented in the student-athlete's file, along with documentation that Admissions, when applicable, has determined transferability of credits earned prior to enrollment at UT Permian Basin and transfer grade point average.

The FAR and Registrar should be given access to the NCAA Compliance Assistant application in order to facilitate the eligibility review and verification process.

In addition, evidence of the NCAA Eligibility Center certification should be documented in each student-athlete's file. Such evidence could be a screenshot (including date) or a signed and dated certification by the Athletics Compliance Officer (ACO). While information is available online, evidence of certification in each file provides documentation that the ACO has reviewed the eligibility certification.

Management's Response/Action Plan

The Athletics Department concurs with the finding and recommendations: A) The Athletics Compliance Officer will work with the FAR and the Registrar to ensure that each student-athlete file contains an eligibility assessment form that is signed by the Athletics Compliance Officer, FAR and Registrar to document that the student-athlete's eligibility has been reviewed in accordance with the procedures listed in the Athletics Compliance Manual. B) Documentation, when applicable, will be maintained in

each student-athlete file that Admissions has determined the transferability of credits earned prior to enrollment at UT Permian Basin and transfer grade point average. C) The Athletics Department will work with Information Technology Services to develop access for the FAR and Registrar to the NCAA Compliance Assistant application for use in the eligibility review process. D) Certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center will be documented by including a copy of the screenshot in each student-athlete file.

Implementation Date

January 1, 2021 for items A, B and D. August 2021 for item C.

Person Responsible for Implementation

Erin Bohn, Athletics Compliance Officer

Status of Prior Year Findings and Recommendations

N/A

Conclusion

Overall, we found that UTPB is complying with NCAA rules regarding student-athlete eligibility, and eligibility determinations made by the Athletics Department were verified and supported. However, some opportunities exist for improvement in the documentation of eligibility in student-athlete files.

APPENDIX A

Report Distribution List

Audit Committee Members

Dr. Sandra Woodley, President
Christi Brown, CPA, External Chair – Internal Audit Committee
Robert Belk, Chief Information Security Officer
Marisol Chriesman, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations/Endowment Compliance Officer
Dr. Rajalingam Dakshinamurthy, Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies
Dr. Daniel Heimmermann, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Tanya Lowery, Chief Compliance Officer
Meredith McKeehan, CPA, External member
Bradley Shook, Vice President for Information Technology and Analytics
Catherine Speer, CPA, External member
Dr. Rebecca Spurlock, Vice President for Student Development and Leadership
Cesario Valenzuela, CPA, Vice President for Business Affairs and Chief Financial Officer

Additional Distribution

Scott Farmer, Director of Athletics
Erin Bohn, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance
Doug Binnion, CIA, Senior Auditor II
Chau Tran, CPA, Auditor III

Required External Distribution

UT System Audit Office
State Auditor's Office
Office of the Governor – Budget and Policy Division
Legislative Budget Board