

Clearly Better

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Plain Language at Work

NCAA Rewrites the Book for Transfers

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The rules that apply to college athletes are complex and difficult for many people to understand and follow. Unfortunately, these confusing rules govern critical decisions that athletes must make when they consider transferring to another school to continue playing their sport.

The Membership staff at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) found that when athletes are in the middle of making these tough decisions, they consult many people — parents, teachers, coaches, compliance officers, athletic directors, and NCAA staff — trying to uncover the facts and unravel the red tape. At that point, all of these adult authorities must know the rules, understand their ramifications, and offer sound advice based on facts. When transfer issues arise, many of those folks turned to NCAA's *Transfer Guide* to figure out whether transferring would be a good idea and how it should be done to enable the student to continue an athletic career.

In the past, the problem was that the *Transfer Guide* was dense, confusing, and difficult to navigate. Athletes and their families grew frustrated trying to discover which rules applied to them, what their options were, and what the ramifications of their decisions would be. Consequently, many people simply called the NCAA before they took the time to read the book. That meant

NCAA staff had to first educate callers about all of the issues involved and then respond to several specific questions in follow-up phone calls. The staff commitment was more burdensome than it needed to be.

To reduce the volume of calls and answer basic questions more directly, the NCAA decided that it was time to rethink and revamp the guide. At the beginning of this school season, the NCAA unveiled the newly designed and rewritten *Transfer 101: Basic Information You Need to Know About Transferring to an NCAA College*.

With the new book, the NCAA took a fresh look at the entire process of transferring, assuming the point of view of readers who don't know any of the key issues, leading them through the basic questions, and defining the main concepts. The Center for Clear Communication led NCAA staff through the rethinking process, beginning with the original guide and ending with an attractive, clear publication that answers questions for readers and reduces the workload for staff.

How did we conduct the project?

We began by reviewing any background material that was available, focusing on uncovering information that would help us plug gaps that may exist in the original guide. We collaborated with a team of NCAA experts who had

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