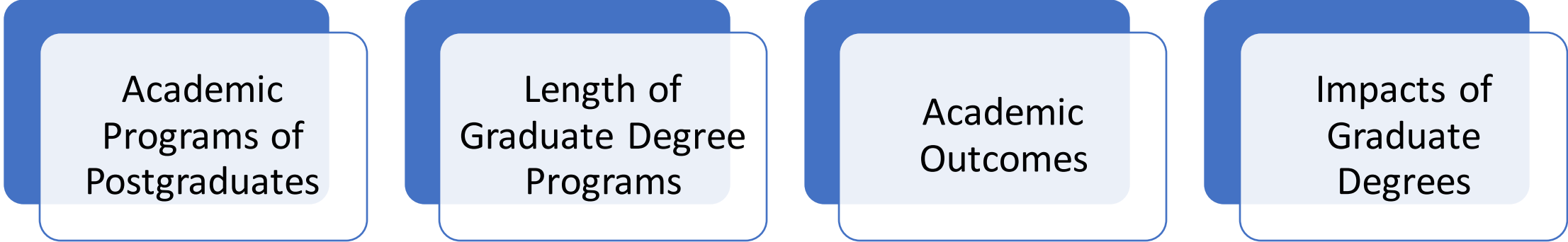


Post-Graduate Student Athlete Academics

Introduction



Academic
Programs of
Postgraduates

Length of
Graduate Degree
Programs

Academic
Outcomes

Impacts of
Graduate
Degrees

Academic History in Division I NCAA Sports

- There are 350 NCAA Division I members who field more than 6,700 athletic teams each year
 - These members provide more than 187,000 student-athletes the opportunity to compete in NCAA sports while pursuing higher education
- In 2019, 3,512 postgraduate student-athletes competed in Division I sports
 - This makes up about 3% of the total number of DI student-athletes competing that year
 - Postgraduate student-athletes are athletes who have completed their undergraduate degree before exhausting their eligibility (NCAA, 2020)

Postgraduate Enrollment

- 81% of postgraduate athletes continue their education at their undergraduate institution
- 76% are enrolled in graduate programs rather than secondary undergraduate coursework
- 12% of programs are one year long



Program Type	% of Postgraduate Enrollment	Estimated Number per Year
Undergraduate		
Second degree or second major	16%	508
General coursework	7%	225
Certificate program	<1%	6
Graduate		
Graduate degree (same institution)	54%	1,697
Graduate degree (transfer)	19%	580
General Studies (non-degree seeking)	2%	59
Certificate program	1%	41

Program Type	% of Postgraduate Enrollment				
	Men's Basketball	Football	Men's Other	Women's Basketball	Women's Other
Undergraduate					
Second Degree or second major	14%	25%	11%	14%	9%
General Coursework	6%	11%	4%	5%	5%
Certificate Program	0%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%
Graduate					
Graduate Degree (same institution)	38%	45%	64%	57%	65%
Graduate degree (transfer)	40%	14%	18%	19%	18%
General studies (non-degree seeking)	1%	3%	2%	3%	1%
Certificate program	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%

Length of Programs

- The length of graduate degree programs varies by the specific type of program the postgraduate student-athlete is enrolled in
 - For those enrolled in graduate certificate programs, 65% are in one-year programs
 - For students enrolled in graduate programs at the same institution as their undergraduate degree, 45% are in one-two year programs and 38% are in two-year programs
 - For students enrolled in graduate programs at different institutions, 44% are in one-two year programs and 45% are in two-year programs

Academic Outcomes for Graduate Students at their Undergraduate Institution

Sport	Earned Degree	Still Enrolled	Left Program
Women's Track	82%	9%	10%
Women's Basketball	69%	5%	25%
Women's Other	81%	7%	11%
Football	61%	3%	35%
Men's Basketball	55%	8%	38%
Men's Track	72%	9%	18%
Men's Other	70%	6%	24%

Academic Outcomes for Graduate Transfer Students

SPORT	EARNED DEGREE	STILL ENROLLED	LEFT PROGRAM
Women's Track	63%	6%	31%
Women's Basketball	56%	6%	38%
Women's Other	79%	3%	18%
Football	31%	5%	64%
Men's Basketball	34%	4%	62%
Men's Track	60%	14%	26%
Men's Other	64%	5%	30%

Academic Outcomes Summary

Graduate Student-Athletes are more likely to complete their degrees if they stay at their undergraduate institution across all studied groups

Female athletes are more likely to complete their graduate degrees than male athletes

Male athletes competing in sports other than football and basketball are more likely to complete their degrees

Research Surrounding Post Graduate Student Athletes

- Postgraduate student-athletes have been almost absent from research surrounding the implications of collegiate athletic participation on students
- Most of the research surrounds Division I Football players
- Mainly qualitative research



Impact of Graduate Degrees on Stereotyping

- One study examined how pursuing graduate degrees impacted the football players' vulnerability to stereotyping
 - Student-athletes are often subjected to multiple harmful stereotypes and systemic attitudes towards their academic ability
 - Pursuing a graduate degree can help limit an athlete's vulnerability to these harmful stereotypes; however, outside societal and individual obstacles can negate the degree's positive effect
- Graduate student-athletes report less stereotyping in graduate courses and more opportunities to feel like a *student*
 - Despite these benefits, the relative invisibility of graduate student athletes in the media, their locker rooms, and on-campus, inhibits the degree's effect on fighting stereotypes

Choosing Graduate Degrees over Post-Baccalaureate Studies

- Another study examined student-athletes' motivations for pursuing a graduate degree
 - Most Student-Athletes who pursue a graduate degree do so as a conscious choice that aligns with their career interests
 - While their decision was influenced by eligibility and other athletic factors, athletes who pursued a specific graduate degree had differing rationales for doing so
- Participants in the study put more credence on choosing their graduate degrees than their undergraduate course of study
 - The chosen degrees aligned with their career interests, were outside of the normal academic clusters, inspired their intellectual curiosity, or allowed them to explore career options
 - Many also felt that a graduate degree would help their career prospects and introduce themselves to other important career connections

Engaging Athletes Through Graduate Degrees

- This study looked at the trajectories of DI Football players who earned their bachelor's degrees before exhausting their eligibility
 - It found that working towards a graduate degree helped re-legitimize each athlete's *student* identity
- The graduate-level coursework may help ease the psychological transition from sport
 - Also serves to help career-readiness and advancement for a life after football
- Each also felt higher quality faculty and peer interaction as a graduate(d) student athlete

Implications of Graduate(d) Student-Athlete Research

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- Pursuing graduate degrees or post-baccalaureate coursework can have positive psychological and social effects on student-athletes
 - Can help to reduce anxieties related to stereotyping and transitioning for sport
 - However, colleges and the media must treat graduate(d) student-athletes better
 - Colleges must work to make graduate(d) student-athletes feel less invisible and more supported
 - The media must place more emphasis on correctly identifying the education of the athlete
 - i.e., not referring to a graduate athlete as a “fifth-year senior”

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