



USA Rugby 2016-2017 | Collegiate Eligibility Primer

Are YOU eligible to participate at the collegiate level?

So you want to play some college ball? That's great! The current collegiate rugby landscape and its level of competition here in the United States is developing at a blistering pace, why wouldn't you want to play?! This eligibility primer should help you determine whether or not you are eligible to play college rugby, and direct you on how to go about requesting eligibility. If you have further concerns or curiosities, please reach out to Justin Holshuh at 303.539.0300 ext. 110 or eligibility@usarugby.org. All documentation referred to herein is available on the USA Rugby homepage under the Member Resources—Eligibility tab.

When considering collegiate eligibility, there are a few very IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- You must be enrolled fulltime at your college or university
- You must be representing the institution to which you are enrolled
- You must be in good standing as defined by the institution's registrar
- You must be an undergraduate or eligible for a graduate student waiver
- You must not have competed for another collegiate rugby club

These things considered, there are exemptions to some of these regulations, but you may only be eligible via exemption if you have received an approved eligibility waiver for the regulation you are attempting to bypass. The following breakdown will examine the collegiate eligibility waiver request form and how it can be used to pursue eligibility, as well as the necessary documentation you will need to include when submitting your materials.

Eligibility Waivers for Collegiate Full-Time Enrollment Status, regulation 4.3(a):

"I'm enrolled part-time, but I'm going to be graduating at the end of the semester, can I still play even though I'm part-time?"

Individuals who wish to participate as part-time students may do so, but ONLY if they are in their final two academic terms prior to graduation. In addition to the required materials for all collegiate waiver requests these individuals must also provide a letter from the institutions registrar verifying that they are on track to graduate within the next two academic semesters.

Eligibility Waivers for Graduate Student Participation, regulation 4.3(b):

"I'm a graduate student, but I haven't used all 5 years of eligibility. Can I still play this year?"

Individuals who wish to participate as graduate students may do so, but ONLY if they are taking a full-time course load and received their undergraduate diploma from a domestic institution (located within the United States). Additionally, it is expected that graduate students will fulfill the other requirements or participation as set by the eligibility regulations (please see IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER above)

Eligibility Waivers for Collegiate 5-Year Limit, regulation 4.3(e):

"I have been registered with my collegiate club for 5 years, but I sustained an injury that forced me to sit out for one year. Can I get this year back?"

In the event that you have been registered with your collegiate club for 5 years and had to sit out a period of time due to injury, you may request to gain this period of time back through the waiver request pathway. For example, in the event that you have missed a whole year due to a knee injury, you can request to gain the whole year's worth of eligibility back. Along with the standard required documentation accompanying every waiver request, you would additionally want to include supporting medical documentation to evidence your injury as the reason for your non-participation.

Eligibility Waivers for 6th and 7th year participation after high school graduation, regulation 4.3(f) & 4.3(g):

"I heard that my high school graduation has something to do with my eligibility, what does it mean and how does it affect me?"

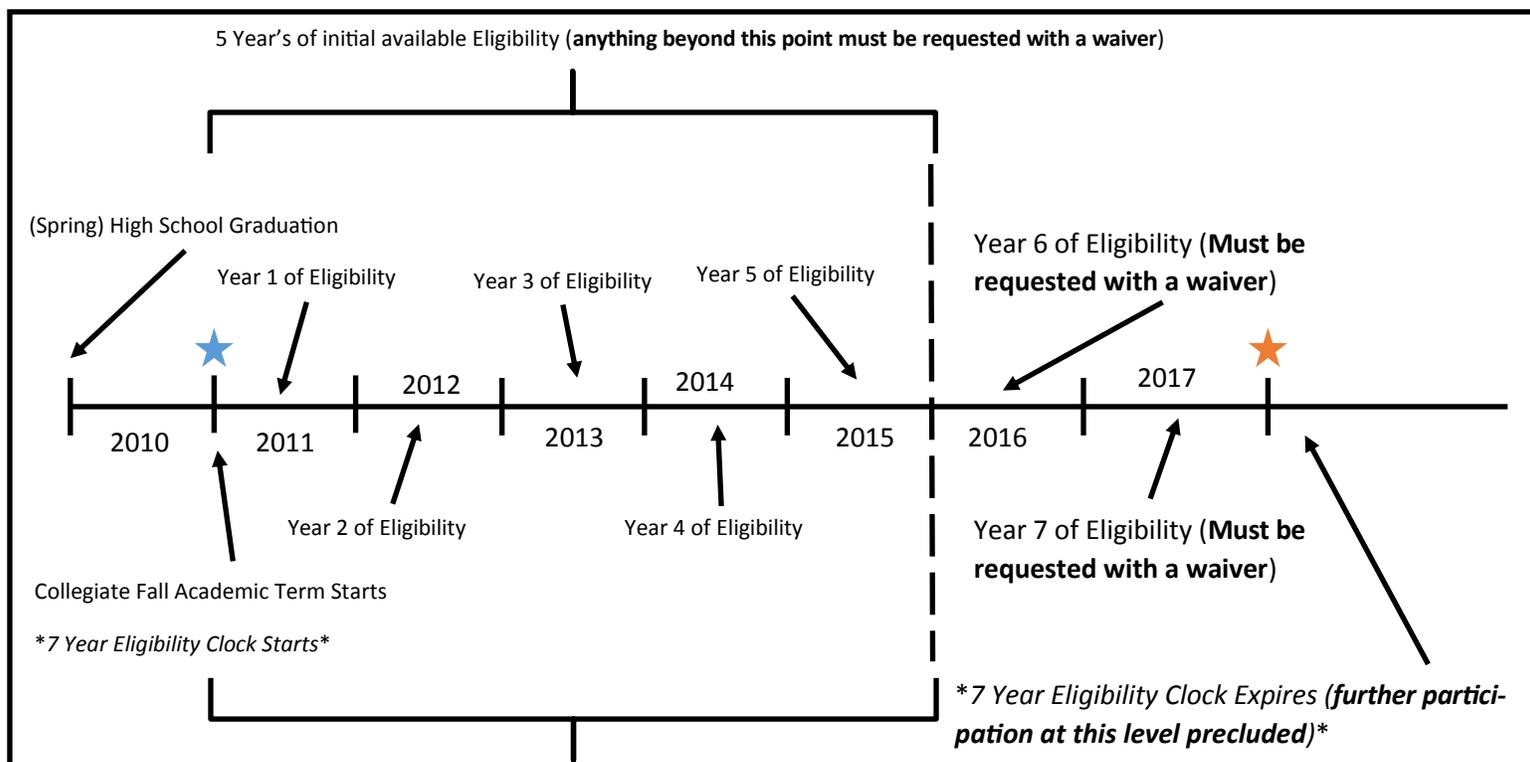
You heard right! Your date of high school graduation certainly has an effect on your collegiate eligibility. The easiest way to determine where you stand in regards to your high school graduation is to remember that you have "7 for 5." In other words, you have 7 years after your high school graduation (timeline starting the following fall academic term) with which you can play a total of 5 years of collegiate rugby.

Example: Lucy graduated high school in 2010. During the fall of 2010, Lucy's 7 year eligibility clock starts running. Lucy decides she would like to see the world, so she takes two years off and travels all over. When she returns in 2012, she enrolls in a collegiate institution in the fall. Because Lucy still has five academic years remaining within her 7 year eligibility window, she will be able to play all 5 of those years.

However, in order to play in the 6th and 7th year after high school you do need to request eligibility via the waiver pathway. In this circumstance you will need to provide evidence of your high school graduation date. This may be done so with a photocopy of your diploma or high school transcripts, in addition

to the other required waiver documentation. USA Rugby uses your high school graduation date to confirm that you fall within the 7 year window of eligibility and then verifies historical registration records to confirm that an individual has not used their full 5 years of eligibility.

Please see the graphic below for an illustration of the collegiate eligibility timeline :



Eligibility Waivers for Collegiate Eligibility Grandfather Clause, regulation 4.3.2:

"I was enrolled in college during the 2011-2012 season and was registered to play collegiate rugby. I am still within 5 years of my first college enrollment, do I have any eligibility left?"

The answer is *possibly*. We are always trying to improve the structure and atmosphere of the collegiate rugby landscape, the regulations are revised on an annual basis and sometimes updated. In the event that your eligibility was effected by one of these changes, you may be able to request eligibility through a Collegiate Grandfather Clause waiver. This regulation dictates that you have 5 years to compete after your first enrollment in college. Notably, there are no extensions offered to this time-frame.

Transfers, regulation 13.5.2, 13.5.2(a):

"I recently transferred schools and I want to begin participating with my new institution's rugby club. How do I transfer my registration?"

In the event that you have changed schools or recently enrolled in a college program, you may elect to transfer your registration to your new school's club team in the event that you have not participated in any qualifying matches during the same competitive cycle (September 1st—August 31st of the following year) with any other collegiate or senior rugby club. Notably, you will need to be released in good standing by both your former collegiate club and your former collegiate conference. This release should specifically mention your non-participation in qualifying matches with your former club.

"My college season has come to an end and I would still like to play. Can I transfer to a senior club for the rest of the cycle?"

In the event that your collegiate season has come to an end, you may request a waiver to transfer to a senior club team. In order to complete this type of transfer, you will need to pursue the **senior club** eligibility pathway. A Senior Club Eligibility Waiver Request form in conjunction with a former club release, collegiate conference release, and personal statement is a complete case, which is then submitted to the Senior Club Eligibility Committee for review. Both releases should mention that your competitive collegiate season has come to an end.

Elite College Players seeking temporary transfer to Elite Senior clubs 13.5.2(a):

"I have been identified as an Elite College Player, can I transfer to an Elite Senior club while maintaining my collegiate eligibility?"

Players who have been identified as Elite College Players (through an Elite Player review committee) may be approved for temporary transfer to join an Elite Senior club for a high level competitive opportunity without affecting their collegiate eligibility. The player may only transfer for the listed and approved senior club matches, as assessed by the committee. Notably, current elite senior level competition includes the American Rugby Premiership (ARP), the Pacific Rugby Premiership (PRP), and the Women's Premier League (WPL).

Still a bit confused? Not to worry, you can reach out to USA Rugby's Eligibility Coordinator at 303.539.0300 ext. 110 or eligibility@usarugby.org with questions or concerns.

Note: This document is only meant to assist with reading the USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations, and is not an authority over or in place of that document. Interpretation ambiguities and waiver allowances are solely the responsibilities of the USA Rugby Eligibility Committees and any appeal board sanctioned by USA Rugby, per USA Rugby rules, practices and procedures. (UPDATED AUGUST, 2015)