Organizational Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Athletic Certification Process

Registrar's Office, Athletics, Provost's Office

Student-athletes must meet "progress toward degree" standards to stay eligible to compete. While the current athletic certification process meets NCAA rules, the university wanted to go beyond compliance in order to better serve students. A team from Athletics, the Registrar's Office, and Academic Advising developed an action set that will make the process easier, faster, and more effective for everyone.

Sponsors:
- Aaron Marterer, University Registrar
- Maria Hickman, Executive Associate Athletics Director
- Lara Lomicka Anderson, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Team:
- Maria Hickman, Athletics, Team Co-Lead
- BJ Beckham, Registrar's Office, Team Co-Lead
- Charlie Ball, Athletics
- Justin Light, Athletics
- Angie Ludwig, Athletics
- Kathy Smiling, HRSM

Recommended improvements and expected impact:

Process-related

1. Use a 2-tier process – Start with ready forms (approx. 2/3 of total) instead of waiting for all.
   → Moves up processing by up to 3 weeks for most certification forms.

2. Create a Teams channel for certification tasks to centralize forms, requests, and tracking.
   → Saves approximately 40 hours/semester and simplifies tracking.

3. Review forms weekly as they arrive – Avoid batch delays.
   → Cuts backlogs and allows timely course fixes.

4. Dodie liaison monitors and flags issues early – Leads outreach.
   → Saves an estimated 40 hours/semester and keeps requests moving.

Tech-related

5. Auto-fill forms using Degree Works data – Eliminate manual entry.
   → Saves about 24 hours/semester and cuts prep time by 3 days.

6. Use Degree Works for credit and progress checks – Rely on audit.
   → Speeds resolution and reduces return times.

7. Share "fall-through" report – Spot non-degree courses fast.
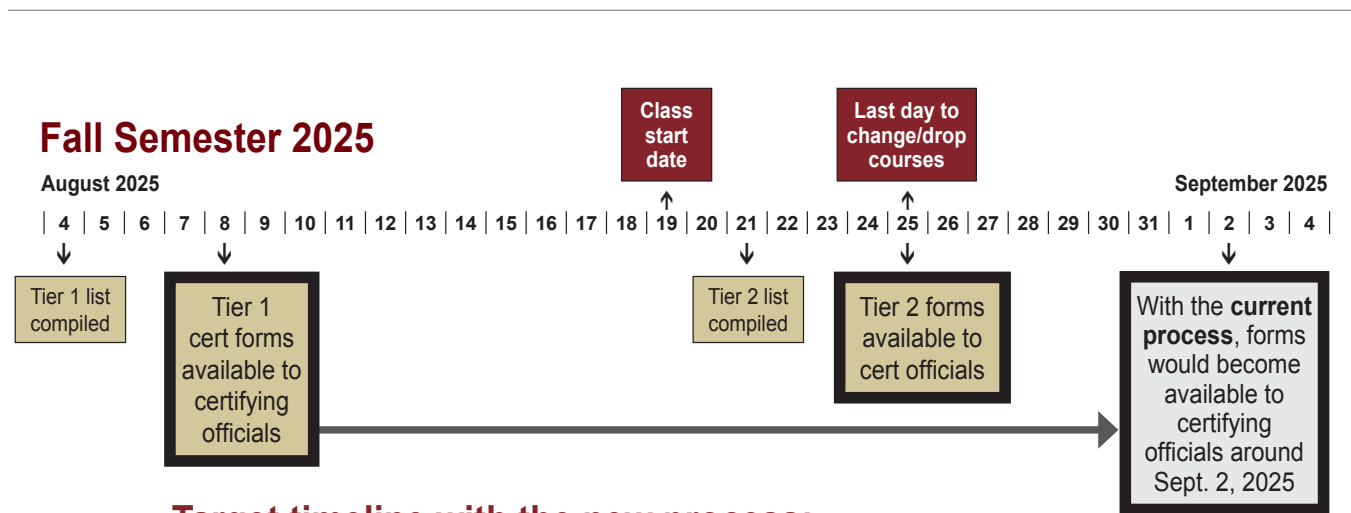   → Reduces follow-ups and ensures correct exceptions

Role-related

8. Clarify all certification roles – Define responsibilities.
   → Lowers errors and prevents task gaps.

9. Standardize communication structure – Clear lines and roles.
   → Replaces confusion with consistency.

10. Require yearly CCO/advisor training – Keep knowledge fresh.
    → Boosts accuracy and compliance support.

11. Host college-specific joint sessions – Train together.
    → Builds consistency and reduces errors.

Key Results

BEFORE	AFTER
Certification forms typically available to college certification officials about **2 weeks after class start date**	Target timeline: **Tier 1 forms available to cert officials 3 weeks <u>sooner</u> and <u>before</u> class start date** (Tier 1 = approx. 60-70% of certification forms)
	Target timeline: **Tier 2 forms available 1 week <u>sooner</u> and about 1 week after class start date** (Tier 2 is for schedules still being worked on before or soon after start date)
Cert forms often worked on at a point of peak workload in semester	With forms arriving earlier, processing can be done before workloads hit peak
Registrar's Office liaison has hands-on role through-out process, involving **12 steps**	Registrar's Office liaison role is focused to **5 steps** Saves the Registrar's Office an estimated **104 work hours** per semester
Roles, responsibilities, and the importance of this work are not consistently understood – which causes confusion, delays, and tasks falling through the cracks	Clear roles and consistent practices to improve accurate and timely processing – so that student-athletes are well-served and compliance is ensured

Fall Semester 2025

August 2025 ... **September 2025**

Class start date

Last day to change/drop courses

Tier 1 list compiled

Tier 1 cert forms available to certifying officials

Tier 2 list compiled

Tier 2 forms available to cert officials

With the **current process**, forms would become available to certifying officials around Sept. 2, 2025

Target timeline with the new process:

Tier 1 certification forms would be available to certifying officials **3 full work weeks sooner**.
Tier 1 includes student-athletes whose schedules are unlikely to change as well as early certifications.

Tier 2 certification forms would be available **1 full work week sooner**.
Tier 2 includes student-athletes whose schedules are still being worked on before or soon after the class start date.