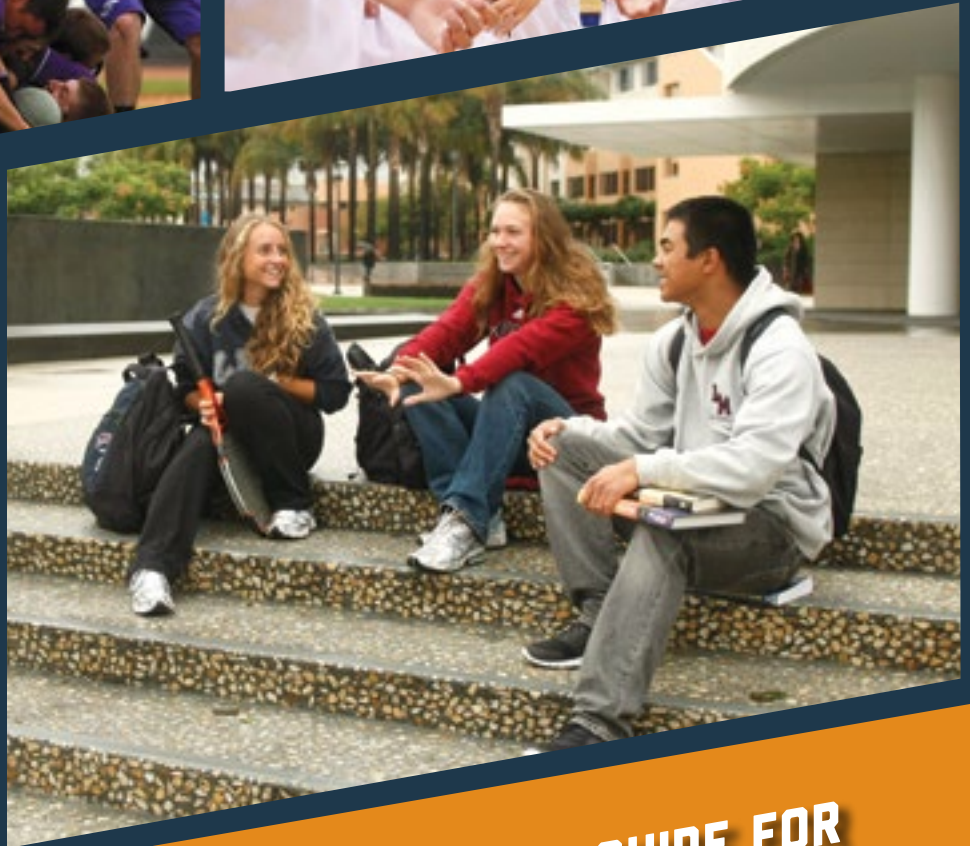




Eligibility Center



# 2015-16 GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS

# Table of Contents

## 3 How To Use This Guide

This guide answers questions for high school counselors and administrators navigating the initial-eligibility process.

---

## 4 What Is the NCAA?

Find out who makes up the NCAA membership and a description of how the Association works.

---

## 6 NCAA Sports

Learn about the sports and championships that the NCAA sponsors.

---

## 8 High School Review by the NCAA – What Is It?

Assist your college-bound student-athletes by making sure your school and its courses are listed with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

---

## 9 Initial-Eligibility Process

Follow a grade-by-grade flowchart of the NCAA initial-eligibility process.

---

## 10 The Role of the High School

This section provides a valuable checklist for counselors as they guide college-bound student-athletes.

---

## 12 What Are Core Courses?

Learn the types of courses that will help college-bound student-athletes meet the Divisions I and II standards.

---

## 14 Nontraditional Courses

Learn the types of nontraditional courses that will help college-bound student-athletes meet the Divisions I and II standards.

---

## 15 Credit Recovery Programs

See the requirements that must be met for courses from credit recovery programs to count as an NCAA core course.

### **Sending Transcripts**

Find instructions on how to submit transcripts for college-bound student-athletes to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

## 16 Division I Standards

Learn the standards to compete at a Division I school.

---

## 18 Division II Standards

Learn the standards needed to compete at a Division II school.

---

## 20 Division III Standards

You do not need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center to compete in Division III.

---

## 21 Grade-Point Average

Your core GPA is based on the grades you earn in NCAA-approved courses.

---

## 22 Home School Students

Useful information for home school students.

### **International Students**

Useful information for international students.

---

## 23 NCAA Student Registration

If your college-bound student-athletes want to play sports at an NCAA Division I or II school, they need to register at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org).

---

## 25 Scholarships

Learn more about scholarship opportunities at NCAA schools.

### **National Letter of Intent**

Useful information about the National Letter of Intent.

---

## 26 Important Terms

Learn some key terms about the initial-eligibility and recruiting processes.

---

## 27 Resources

Find a list of websites that will aid you and your student-athletes in their pursuit of playing college sports.

NCAA and March Madness are trademarks of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.



## How To Use This Guide

This guide answers important questions for high school counselors and administrators involved in assisting college-bound student-athletes with the NCAA initial-eligibility process:

### Where Can You Find Answers to Your Questions About NCAA Eligibility?

Find answers to many typical questions about NCAA eligibility by:

- Reading this guide
- Visiting the Resources found at [NCAA.org/eligibilitycenter](https://ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter)
- Visiting [NCAA.org/playcollegesports](https://ncaa.org/playcollegesports) (for students and parents)
- Searching Frequently Asked Questions at [NCAA.org/StudentFAQ](https://ncaa.org/StudentFAQ)
- Contacting the NCAA Eligibility Center.

### NCAA Eligibility Center Contact Information

#### Online

[eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org)

[NCAA.org/playcollegesports](https://ncaa.org/playcollegesports)

[2point3.org](https://2point3.org)

Follow us on Twitter [@NCAA\\_EC](https://twitter.com/NCAA_EC)

#### Phone

U.S. callers (toll free):

877-622-2321

#### Certification Processing

NCAA Eligibility Center

Certification Processing

P.O. Box 7136

Indianapolis, IN 46207-7136

#### Overnight Delivery

NCAA Eligibility Center

Certification Processing

1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive

Indianapolis, IN 46202

# What Is the National Collegiate Athletic Association?

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding student-athlete well-being and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life.

We support learning through sports by integrating athletics and higher education to enrich the college experience of student-athletes. More than 1,200 NCAA members – mostly colleges and universities, but also conferences and affiliated groups – work together to create a framework of rules for fair and safe competition. Those rules are administered by NCAA national office staff, which also organizes national championships and provides other resources to support student-athletes and the schools they attend.

Our diverse membership includes schools with student bodies that range from hundreds of students to tens of thousands. The current three-division structure creates a fair playing field for like-minded schools and provides student-athletes with a wide spectrum of opportunities to participate in 90 championship events.

College and university presidents and chancellors guide each division, supported by an extensive committee structure guided by athletics administrators, faculty and student-athlete representatives. Each division creates its own rules that follow the overarching principles of the NCAA.

## Division I

Division I schools generally have more students, larger athletics budgets and more athletics department support than schools in Division II or III.

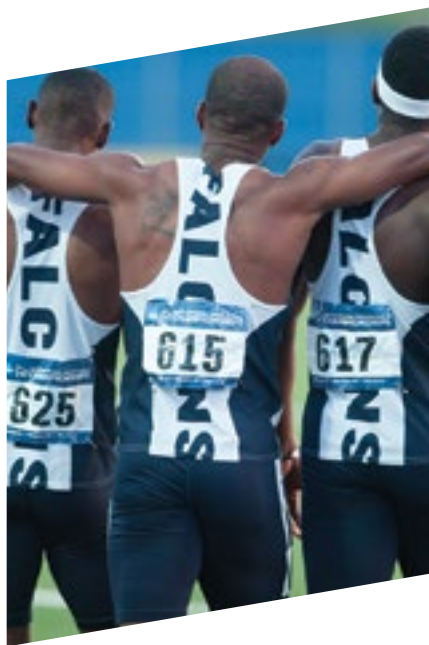
## Division II

Schools in Division II emphasize a life balance in which academically and athletically gifted students can compete at a high level, while maintaining a traditional collegiate experience.

## Division III

Academics are the primary focus for Division III student-athletes who experience shorter sports seasons, reducing their time away from academic studies and other campus activities.





### Do Schools in All Three Divisions Offer Athletics Scholarships?

Schools in Divisions I and II provide more than \$2.7 billion in athletics scholarships annually to more than 150,000 student-athletes. Division III schools do not offer athletically related financial aid, but student-athletes may receive academic or need-based financial aid similar to other students on campus. For more information about scholarships, see page 25.

### Are Initial-Eligibility Standards Similar in All Three Divisions?

If you want to compete at a Division I or II school, you must meet academic and amateurism standards set by the NCAA membership. At Division III schools, you must meet the admission standards set by the school for all incoming students and amateurism standards set by the NCAA membership. For more information about Division III, see page 20.

#### NCAA Facts

**1906**

YEAR ESTABLISHED

**1,300+**

COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES,  
CONFERENCES AND  
ORGANIZATIONS

**346**

ACTIVE DIVISION I MEMBERS

**307**

ACTIVE DIVISION II MEMBERS

**440**

ACTIVE DIVISION III MEMBERS



## NCAA Sports

The NCAA conducts 90 national championships in 24 sports across Divisions I, II and III, with 45 championships administered for women and 42 for men. That means almost 54,000 student-athletes participate in NCAA championships each year.

From signature events such as the NCAA March Madness® men's and women's basketball tournaments to rowing, rifle, softball and skiing, the NCAA puts on championships to ensure student-athletes have a first-class experience. But the NCAA also is committed to quality events for everyone involved, from the coaches to the fans and broadcast audiences.

It is important to the NCAA that our championships have a positive impact on the communities that host them. The NCAA hosts youth clinics and various fan events to complement the competition – creating what is hoped to be a championship experience for everyone involved.

Fall Sports	Winter Sports		Spring Sports		Emerging Sports
Cross Country (M)	Basketball (M)	Basketball (W)	Baseball (M)	Softball (W)	Equestrian (W)
Cross Country (W)	Fencing (M)	Fencing (W)	Golf (M)	Golf (W)	Rugby (W)
Field Hockey (W)	Gymnastics (M)	Gymnastics (W)	Lacrosse (M)	Lacrosse (W)	Triathlon (W)
Football (M)	Ice Hockey (M)	Ice Hockey (W)	Outdoor Track and Field (M)	Outdoor Track and Field (W)	
Soccer (M)	Indoor Track and Field (M)	Indoor Track and Field (W)	Tennis (M)	Tennis (W)	
Soccer (W)	Rifle (M)	Rifle (W)	Volleyball (M)	Beach Volleyball (W)	
Volleyball (W)	Skiing (M)	Skiing (W)		Rowing (W)	
Water Polo (M)	Swimming and Diving (M)	Swimming and Diving (W)		Water Polo (W)	
	Wrestling (M)	Bowling (W)			



# NCAA RECRUITING FACTS

College sports offer student-athletes opportunities to learn, compete and succeed.

More than  
**460,000**  
Student-athletes

**19,000**  
Teams

**3** Divisions  
**1** Association

## DIVISION I

Division I schools, on average, enroll the most students, manage the largest athletics budgets, offer a wide array of academic programs and provide the most athletics scholarships.

### PARTICIPATION

- 173,500 student-athletes
- 346 colleges and universities

### ATHLETICS SCHOLARSHIPS

53 percent of all student-athletes receive some level of athletics aid

### ACADEMICS

2012 Graduation Success Rate:  
81 percent\*

### OTHER STATS

**Average Enrollment:** 12,900

**Average Number of Sports:** 18

**Average Percentage of Student Body Participating in Sports:**  
6 percent

**Division I National**

**Championships:** 26

(1 out of every 8.5 student-athletes participates)

## DIVISION II

Division II provides growth opportunities through academic achievement, high-level athletics competition and community engagement. Many participants are first-generation college students.

### PARTICIPATION

- 109,100 student-athletes
- 300 colleges and universities

### ATHLETICS SCHOLARSHIPS

56 percent of all student-athletes receive some level of athletics aid

### ACADEMICS

2012 Academic Success Rate:  
71 percent\*

### OTHER STATS

**Average Enrollment:** 4,200

**Average Number of Sports:** 15

**Average Percentage of Student Body Participating in Sports:**  
14 percent

**Division II National**

**Championships:** 25

(1 out of every 7 student-athletes participates)

## DIVISION III

The Division III experience provides an integrated environment that focuses on academic success while offering competitive athletics and meaningful non-athletics opportunities.

### PARTICIPATION

- 183,500 student-athletes
- 450 colleges and universities

### FINANCIAL AID

75 percent of all student-athletes receive some form of academic grant or need-based scholarship; institutional gift aid totals \$13,500 on average

### ACADEMICS

2012 Academic Success Rate:  
87 percent\*

### OTHER STATS

**Average Enrollment:** 2,600

**Average Number of Sports:** 18

**Average Percentage of Student Body Participating in Sports:**  
21 percent

**Division III National**

**Championships:** 28

(1 out of every 10 student-athletes participates)

**Want to play NCAA sports? Visit [www.NCAA.org/playcollegesports](http://www.NCAA.org/playcollegesports)**

\*Graduation rate for student-athletes, including those who transfer from one school to another.

# High School Review – What Is It?

The NCAA Eligibility Center's high school review department supports the academic initial-eligibility certification process in alignment with NCAA legislation, directives, policies, and procedures related to secondary education. The high school review staff works together with high schools and districts to determine which courses, programs and schools can be used in a college-bound student-athlete's academic certification. In order for core courses on a student's transcript to be used in an academic certification, it must appear on a school's list of NCAA-approved courses. Without an approved list of NCAA courses, no coursework can be used toward meeting the NCAA academic standards for initial eligibility. The high school review team also collaborates with leading secondary education organizations to stay current with changes in educational policies and practices, and is staffed with individuals from the secondary and post-secondary school communities who have served previously as teachers, administrators, counselors and coaches.

## For High Schools New to the NCAA

If your school is newly established and does not have a list of NCAA courses with the NCAA Eligibility Center, you would be considered a new school, or if your school has been in existence for some time, but has never asked to create a list of NCAA courses, you would be considered a new school.

To create an account with the NCAA Eligibility Center, you must call our toll-free high school line at 877-622-2321 and speak to a customer service representative. The customer service representative will take some basic demographic information from you, including contact names, phone numbers and email addresses. An email will be sent to your contacts with the login and PIN information to access the review portal. Once you receive the email, you may proceed.

### New School Review Process

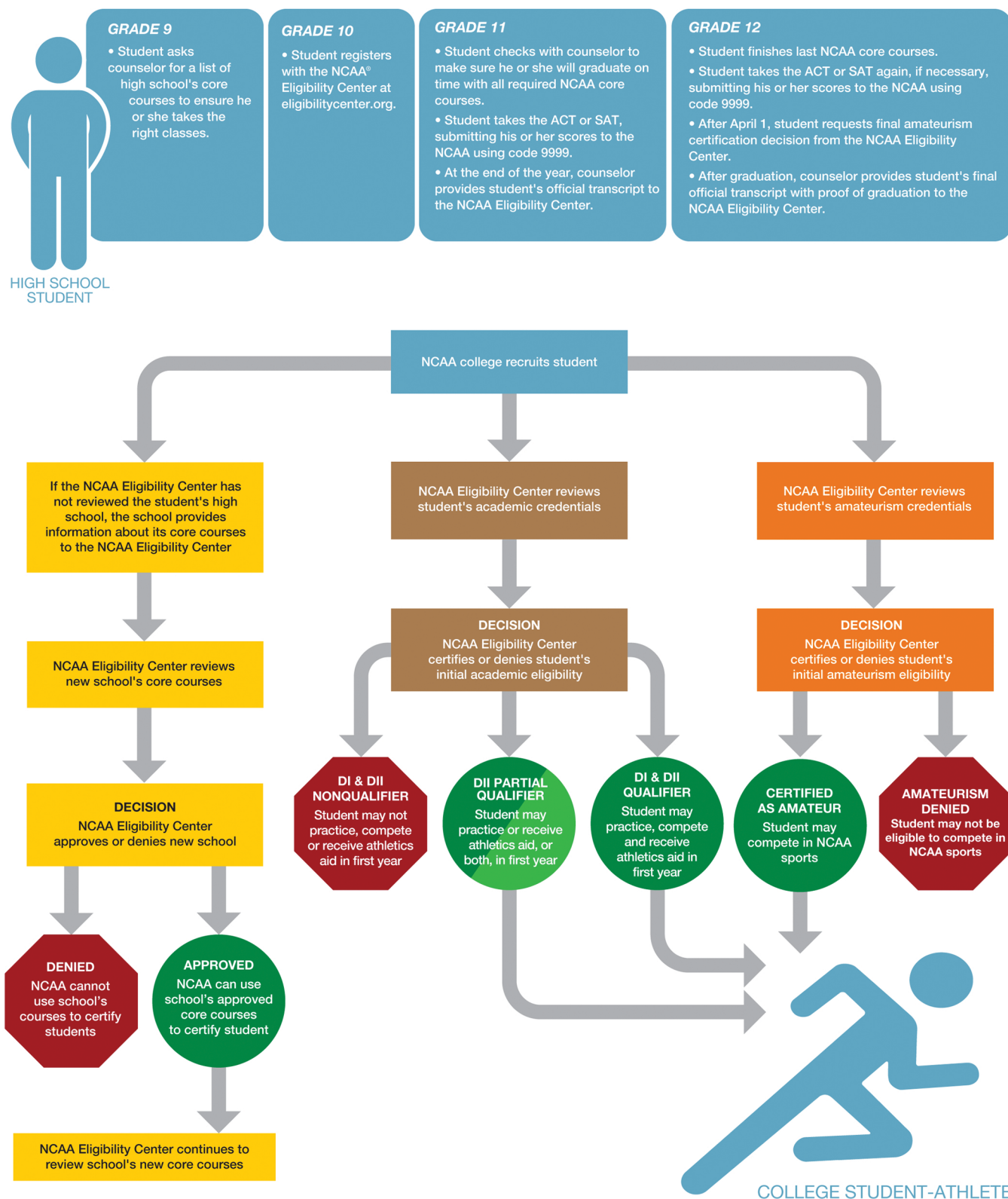
Please note that in order for the NCAA Eligibility Center to fully evaluate your program, you will also need to provide copies of the following documentation. Failure to submit all the information listed below will delay your program review or cause your school/program to be withdrawn from the process:

- ❑ **Course Catalog** – Also known as a Program of Studies or Course Description Guide. This document must contain a detailed course description of all courses. A course catalog or program of studies typically satisfies this requirement. A listing of courses is not sufficient. Syllabi are not sufficient. Table of contents from texts are not sufficient. State curriculum guidelines are not sufficient.
- ❑ **Academic Calendar** – Calendar must outline school start date, all vacation or school not-in-session dates, teacher in-service dates, school end date and graduation date.
- ❑ **Master Schedule** – Master schedule should include course names and corresponding instructors.
- ❑ **Official Transcript Grading Scale** – If using a numeric scale, a corresponding letter grade must be provided. Grading scale information must come from an official policy document such as a policy guide, student handbook, etc.
- ❑ **Transcript Key** – This can be a separate document or you can write explanations on your sample transcript. Required information: how courses from other schools are differentiated on your transcript; explanation of various designations such as symbols, numbers, etc., which may appear on your transcript.
- ❑ **Sample Student Transcript** – Provide a sample transcript from the most recent academic school year. Please redact any student-specific information.
- ❑ **Required Policies** – Policy statements for the following:
  1. Circumstances under which you allow continuing or transfer students to repeat a course or courses;
  2. A list of your graduation requirements; and
  3. Policy on academic integrity (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty). These statements must come from your school's official policy guide or handbook.

You can access a tutorial [here](#) to help walk you through the New School Review process.

# NCAA Initial-Eligibility Process

Below is a flowchart to help you, students and parents to better understand the initial-eligibility process.



NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

# The Role of the High School

We know that high school counselors are pulled in many different directions every day, so we would like to take this opportunity to say, “Thank You!” for the efforts that you put forth for these young athletes.

- Make sure your school’s list of NCAA courses is accurate and up to date as soon as courses have been approved by your board and before you begin registering students for courses.
- Know the Divisions I and II initial-eligibility standards.
- Encourage your college-bound student-athletes to complete the registration process, at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org), at the beginning of their sophomore year.
- Upload official transcripts at the end of the student’s sixth semester (junior year) and eighth semester (graduation from high school).
- Submit fee waivers online for student registrations, when applicable.

## Responsibilities That May Be Delegated to Other Individuals

- Who should and should not register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](http://NCAA Eligibility Center).
  - The student’s family should make the final decision on whether or not to register.
  - Coaches should provide advice on how likely it is that the student will play NCAA sports.
- How students are noticed or recruited for college sports.
  - Coaches should advise and assist during the recruiting process.
  - The student’s family should contact colleges and universities their child is interested in.
- Helping the student and their family understand recruiting rules.
  - The NCAA school(s) that is recruiting the student should ensure the recruiting rules are followed as the rules differ by sport and division.
- How a student can become eligible before graduation.
  - Student-athlete achievement begins at grade nine. Eligibility is a four-year process and every semester counts.
  - Ultimately, the students own their academic decisions, progress and performance.

One of the main tools you will use will be the [High School Portal](http://High School Portal). Through the High School Portal you may submit core course changes, upload official transcripts, submit fee waivers, update your grading scale, search for students from your high school who have registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center and update your school’s contact information. You can find a tutorial on using the High School Portal at [NCAA.org/student-athletes/future/eligibility-center/high-school-administrators](http://NCAA.org/student-athletes/future/eligibility-center/high-school-administrators).





## Now That You Have an NCAA Account

High school administrators keep your information here:

Six-digit High School Code

Five-digit numeric PIN

### Resetting Your PIN

If you have forgotten your high school's PIN, click [here](#) to access a PIN request form.

If you have never had a PIN because your high school does not have a list of NCAA courses or you do not know if your high school has a list of NCAA courses, follow the instructions below:

1. Click on the "List of NCAA Courses" tab at the top of the page on the [High School Portal](#). Input your six-digit NCAA High School Code or six-digit CEEB/ACT Code or search for your school by name. Once you access your school's page, scroll down to see whether there are courses listed. If courses are listed, please fill out the PIN request form as noted in the step above.
2. If you do not have a six-digit NCAA High School Code or a six-digit CEEB/ACT code, or you do not have a list of courses, please call the NCAA Eligibility Center customer service staff on the toll-free high school line at 877-622-2321.

# What Are Core Courses?

NCAA schools require college-bound student-athletes to build a foundation of high school courses to prepare them for college coursework. Students who plan to compete in NCAA sports at Division I or II schools must pass at least 16 NCAA core courses.

For a high school class to be used in the initial-eligibility process as an NCAA-approved core course (per [NCAA Bylaw 14.3.1.2](#)), it must meet these conditions:

1. Be an academic, four-year college preparatory course eligible for high school graduation credit in one or more of these areas:
  - English
  - Math (Algebra I or higher)
  - Natural/physical science
  - Social science
  - Foreign language and/or
  - Comparative religion or philosophy.
2. Be at or above your high school's regular academic level.
3. Be taught by a qualified instructor.

Not all high school classes are NCAA core courses. Some examples of courses that are not NCAA core courses include:

1. Courses in non-core areas, fine arts or vocations such as driver education, typing, art, music, physical education or welding.
2. Courses that prepare students for the world of work or life, or for a two-year college or technical school, such as personal finance, consumer education or tech prep.
3. Courses taught below grade level, at a slower pace or with less rigor or depth, such as basic, essential, fundamental or foundational courses.
4. Courses that are not academic in nature such as film appreciation, video editing or greenhouse management.

## Updating Your Course List

After your school determines new course offerings, you should update your school's list of NCAA courses. If your school determines new course offerings in January and you promptly update your NCAA course list, course decisions will be made by the NCAA Eligibility Center in time for you to schedule students for the next academic year. You may update your school's list of NCAA courses through the [High School Portal](#), which also includes a tutorial on how to update your list.

Courses submitted through the High School Portal will be reviewed within 24 to 48 hours. Your high school's contacts will be notified by email of the status of the submitted courses.

## Changing Course Titles

If the title of a course is substantively changing, you should update your list in the [High School Portal](#). If it is simply a matter of word order, there is no need to submit the change. For example, Honors Biology, Biology Honors, H/Biology, HBio, BioH, Bio-H are all titles used to represent the same honors course in biology.

The following course title changes **SHOULD** be updated:

- Freshman Composition to English 1;
- Biology to Living Environment; and
- Ancient Cultures to World History I.

The following course title changes **DO NOT** need to be updated:

- Algebra 1 to Algebra I;
- H Chem to Chem/H; or
- Econ to Economics.

## Archiving Course Titles

You may choose to archive courses instead of deleting courses that are no longer taught, leaving them visible on your school's list. For example, if your school stopped teaching a class on Shakespeare at the end of the 2013-14 school year, you may remove it from your list, even though students who took the class may still be working through the NCAA eligibility process.

Some schools prefer to keep courses on their active list until the last students who could have taken the course graduate. Other schools prefer to archive their courses once they are no longer taught. What difference does it make? A leaner list can help students, parents and coaches find active courses more easily. Archiving your courses and updating your list of courses can be done via the [High School Portal](#).

## What Happens When Courses Are on Hold or Denied?

When a course is given an RC8 code, it means the review staff needs more documentation about the course to determine if it meets the definition of an NCAA core course. The documentation may be uploaded through the High School Portal for review.

Courses that are denied using other types of codes (specifically RC5, RC11, RC12 and RC17) also may be reviewed if your school believes the course meets the NCAA core-course definition. Make sure you read and understand the definition of an NCAA core course before taking the time to gather and submit documentation.

Click [here](#) to read more about how to upload documentation for courses with the following RC codes: RC5, RC8, RC11, RC12 or RC17.

## Audited Courses

There may be times when a course appears on a high school's list of NCAA courses in error. This may be due to changes in NCAA legislation or a course may have been mistakenly submitted or approved.

When it becomes necessary to audit a course from a list, the NCAA Eligibility Center staff works to ensure students who have taken such a course in the past are not negatively impacted by the removal. For example, if "Health" appeared on a high school's list of NCAA courses and was subsequently audited, it would appear as denied beginning the next academic year. However, students who took the course before it was audited still would be able to use the course in their NCAA academic certification.



# Nontraditional Courses

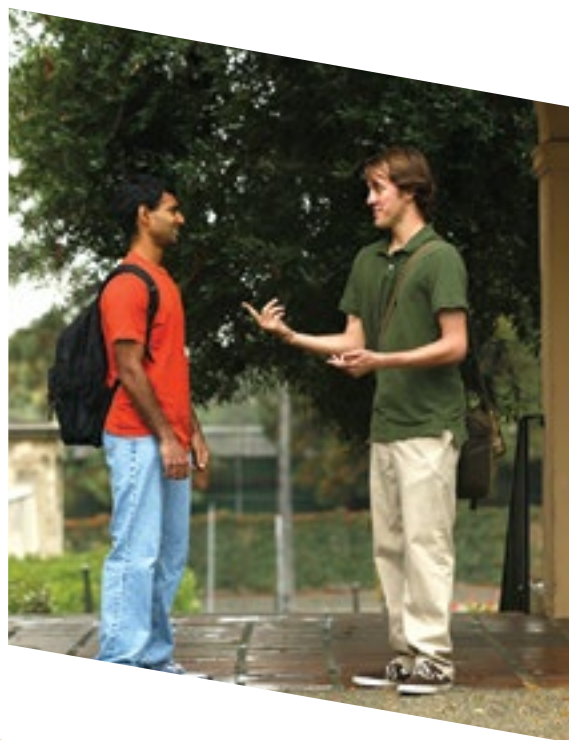
Nontraditional courses are classes taught online or through distance learning, independent study, individualized instruction or correspondence methods. If a nontraditional course or program at your school has not yet been reviewed by the NCAA, please contact the NCAA Eligibility Center at 877-622-2321 to begin the review process.

For a nontraditional course to count as an NCAA core course (per [NCAA Bylaw 14.3.1.2.2](#)), it must meet all the following requirements:

1. A student in the course must have regular interaction with the teacher for instruction, evaluation and assistance for the duration of the course. This may include, for example, exchanging emails between the student and teacher, online chats, phone calls, feedback on assignments, and the opportunity for the teacher to engage the student in individual instruction.
2. The course must have a definite time period for completion. For example, it should be clear whether the course is meant to be taken for an entire semester or during a more condensed time period.
3. The course must be clearly identified as nontraditional on students' official high school transcript.

A nontraditional course could fail to meet NCAA core-course requirements for any of the following reasons:

1. Does not require regular and ongoing interaction between the student and teacher.
2. Does not have certified or qualified teachers.
3. Does not require students to complete the entire course.
4. Allows students to complete a course in a short period of time.
5. Allows students to take numerous courses at the same time, especially courses in the same subject area or that are sequential.
6. Does not prepare students for four-year college classwork.
7. Does not verify a student's identity.
8. Does not have formal assessments or has only limited assessments.
9. Does not retain student-specific data regarding course completion.





## Credit Recovery Programs

Many high schools offer credit recovery or credit retrieval programs for students to receive credit for a course they previously failed. Some students take credit recovery to improve grades for courses that they took previously or to take courses for the first time to catch up.

For a credit recovery course to count as an NCAA core course, it must meet all the following requirements:

1. The course must meet all the requirements of an NCAA-approved core course, and in some instances, nontraditional course.
2. The school must follow its credit recovery policies, regardless if the student is an athlete. The NCAA Eligibility Center may request the school's policy, if necessary.
3. The credit recovery course should be clearly identified as such on the high school transcript.
4. A repeated course must be substantially comparable, qualitatively and quantitatively, to the previously attempted course.

## Sending Transcripts

High schools have the ability to upload transcripts directly to a student's account from the [High School Portal](#). It's free and easy! As with other electronic transcript providers, this process is much quicker than using the U.S. Postal Service or any overnight delivery method. When transcripts are uploaded directly to a student's account, the NCAA Eligibility Center has near real-time access to the transcript. For instructions on how to use this new process, follow the [tutorial](#).

The NCAA Eligibility Center will accept official electronic transcripts from any of the following service providers. Sending transcripts through an approved electronic transcript service or using the NCAA Eligibility Center's direct upload feature is the most efficient way to send transcripts. Electronic transcripts are received and processed within 24 hours. Below is a list of the approved electronic transcript providers:

- [ConnectEDU](#)
- [National Transcript Center/Pearson Edustructure](#)
- [Parchment](#)
- [Scrip Safe](#)
- USMO ET; and
- [XAP](#).

Please note that the NCAA Eligibility Center does not accept faxed or emailed transcripts. In order to send a transcript by U.S. mail or through an overnight or express delivery service, please use the appropriate address from page 3.

# Initial Eligibility Basics – Know the Requirements

College-bound student-athletes who want to compete in NCAA sports at a Division I or II school need to meet certain division-wide academic and amateurism standards. Students who plan to attend a Division III school need to meet the admission standards of the school they plan to attend.

## Division I Initial Eligibility

For students to be eligible to compete in NCAA sports during their first year at a Division I school, they must meet standards for their core courses, core-course grade-point average (GPA) and test scores.

Students must graduate high school and meet ALL the following requirements:

1. Complete 16 core courses:
  - Four years of English
  - Three years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
  - Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it)
  - One additional year of English, math or natural/physical science
  - Two years of social science
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
2. Complete 10 core courses, including seven in English, math or natural/physical science, before the start of their seventh semester. Once students begin their seventh semester, they may not repeat or replace any of those 10 courses to improve their core-course GPA.
3. Earn at least a 2.3 GPA in their core courses.
4. Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching their core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale, which balances test scores and core-course GPA. If students have a low test score, they need a higher core-course GPA to be eligible. If they have a low core-course GPA, they need a higher test score to be eligible.



# Division I Initial Eligibility (Continued)

Students who enroll full time at a Division I school, and have not met all the Division I academic requirements, may not compete in their first year at college. However, if they qualify as an academic redshirt, they may practice during their first term in college and receive an athletics scholarship for the entire year. The academic redshirt qualification is only for students who enroll full time in college after Aug. 1, 2016.

To qualify as an academic redshirt, a student must graduate high school and meet ALL the following academic requirements:

1. Complete 16 core courses:
  - Four years of English
  - Three years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
  - Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it)
  - One additional year of English, math or natural/physical science
  - Two years of social science
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
2. Earn at least a 2.0 GPA in core courses.
3. Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching his or her core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale.

## Core-Course Time Limitations

Student-athletes who plan to attend a Division I school have four years or eight semesters after starting grade nine to finish the required 16 core courses. Students who enroll full time at a Division I school after Aug. 1, 2016, must complete 10 core courses, including seven in English, math or natural/physical science, before their seventh semester. Once they begin their seventh semester, they may not repeat or replace any of those 10 courses to improve their core-course GPA.

Students who graduate on time may complete one additional core-course unit after graduating high school. The additional core-course unit must be completed within one year after high school graduation and must be completed before the student's first full-time college enrollment. The additional core course unit may be taken at a different school than the high school from which the student graduated as long as the class is on the new school's list of NCAA-approved courses. If the student takes the additional core course at a school other than the school from which they graduated, the NCAA Eligibility Center must receive an official transcript from the new school showing the additional core-course grade and credit. If the student takes the additional core course through a program that does not award credit, the course must be awarded credit by a credit-awarding high school.





## Division II Initial Eligibility

For students to be eligible to compete in NCAA sports during their first year at a Division II school, they must meet academic requirements for their core courses, core-course grade-point average (GPA) and test scores. The requirements are changing for students who enroll full time for the first time at a Division II school after Aug. 1, 2018.

Students planning to attend a Division II school can complete a minimum of 16 NCAA core courses after starting grade nine and before they enroll full time in college. There is not a limit to the number of additional courses that students can take if they are planning to enroll in an NCAA Division II school.

### Students Who Enroll BEFORE Aug. 1, 2018

Students must graduate high school and meet ALL the following requirements:

1. Complete 16 core courses:
  - Three years of English
  - Two years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
  - Two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it)
  - Three additional years of English, math or natural or physical science
  - Two years of social science
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
2. Earn at least a 2.0 GPA in core courses.
3. Earn an SAT combined score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

## Division II Initial Eligibility (Continued)

If students enroll full time at a Division II school before Aug. 1, 2018, and have not met all the Division II academic requirements, they may not compete their first year in college. However, if they meet the requirements to be a partial qualifier, they may practice and receive an athletics scholarship their first year in college. To be a partial qualifier, they must graduate high school and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Earn a 2.0 GPA in 16 core courses:
  - Three years of English
  - Two years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
  - Two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it)
  - Three additional years of English, math or natural or physical science
  - Two years of social science
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy.

OR

2. Earn an SAT combined score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

### Students Who Enroll AFTER Aug. 1, 2018

Students must graduate high school and meet ALL the following requirements:

1. Complete 16 core courses:
  - Three years of English.
  - Two years of math (Algebra 1 or higher).
  - Two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
  - Three additional years of English, math or natural or physical science
  - Two years of social science
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
2. Earn at least a 2.2 GPA in their core courses.
3. Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching their core-course GPA on the Division II competition sliding scale, which balances test scores and core-course GPA. If students have a low test score, they need a higher core-course GPA to be eligible. If they have a low core-course GPA, they need a higher test score to be eligible.

Students who enroll full time at a Division II school after Aug. 1, 2018, and have not met all the Division II academic requirements may not compete in their first year at college. However, if they meet the requirements to be a partial qualifier, they may practice during their first term in college and receive an athletics scholarship for the entire year. To be a partial qualifier, they must graduate high school and meet ALL the following academic requirements:

1. Complete 16 core courses:
  - Three years of English.
  - Two years of math (Algebra 1 or higher).
  - Two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
  - Three additional years of English, math or natural or physical science
  - Two years of social science
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy
2. Earn at least a 2.0 GPA in core courses.
3. Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching their core-course GPA on the Division II partial qualifier sliding scale.



## Division III Initial Eligibility

Division III schools provide an integrated environment focusing on academic success while offering a competitive athletics environment. Division III rules minimize potential conflicts between athletics and academics and focus on regional in-season and conference play.

While Division III schools do not offer athletics scholarships, 75 percent of Division III student-athletes receive some form of merit or need-based financial aid.

If a student is planning to attend a Division III school, he/she does not need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Division III schools set their own admissions and eligibility standards. Students can visit [NCAA.org/d3](http://NCAA.org/d3) or contact the Division III school they are planning to attend.

# Grade-Point Average

The NCAA Eligibility Center calculates core-course grade-point averages (GPAs) based on the grades students earn in NCAA-approved core courses. Only the best grades from the required number of NCAA core courses will be used. Grades from additional core courses will be used only if they improve the student's grade-point average.

GPAs are calculated on a 4.000 scale. Numeric grades such as 92 or 87 are changed to letter grades such as A or B. The NCAA Eligibility Center does not use plus or minus grades when calculating a GPA. Weighted honors or Advanced Placement courses may improve a student's core-course GPA but the high school must notify the NCAA Eligibility Center that it weights grades in these classes.

In Pass/Fail grading situations, the NCAA Eligibility Center will assign the high school's lowest passing grade for a course in which the student received a Pass grade. For most high schools, the lowest passing grade is a D, so the NCAA Eligibility Center generally assigns a D as a passing grade.

## Calculating Quality Points

In order to determine a student's quality points earned for each course, multiply the quality points for the grade by the amount of credit earned.

### Examples:

- An A grade (4 points) for a trimester course (0.34 units):  
 $4 \text{ points} \times 0.34 \text{ units} = 1.36 \text{ quality points}$
- An A grade (4 points) for a semester course (0.50 units):  
 $4 \text{ points} \times 0.50 \text{ units} = 2.00 \text{ quality points}$
- An A grade (4 points) for a full-year course (1.00 units):  
 $4 \text{ points} \times 1.00 \text{ units} = 4.00 \text{ quality points}$

The following worksheets will help you to determine a student's core-course GPA.

[Divisions I and II Worksheets](#)





## Home School Students

Learning at home is not necessarily the same as being home schooled. Because of recent growth in online and virtual education, a student may be able to learn at home through an online school with online teachers, which would not be considered a parent-directed home school.

Courses that will be evaluated as home school courses are those in which a parent or tutor:

- Plans and delivers actual instructional activities such as lectures, discussions, tutorials, feedback or assistance.
- Determines the student's comprehension of the material by grading and evaluating student performance and achievement on assignments and assessments and providing appropriate re-teaching and feedback.
- Determines the overall grade the student achieved in the course.
- Places the grade on a transcript or grade report or reports the grade to a transcription agency.

If you know a home school student who wants to play NCAA sports at a Division I or II school, he/she will need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and meet the same standards as all other students. Click [here](#) for more information about home schooled students.

## International Students

If you are assisting an international college-bound student-athlete or a student who attended secondary school outside of the United States, please refer to the [Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#).

International college-bound student-athletes must submit the following academic documents:

- Academic records for years nine and up, in the student's native language and translated to English;
- Proof of graduation, including certificates, diplomas or final leaving exams; and
- SAT or ACT scores.

Failure to include any of these items may delay review of the student's records. In certain situations, the NCAA Eligibility Center may ask for additional academic documentation to clarify that the student's academic information is complete, valid and accurate. For more information, call the NCAA Eligibility Center's international academic certification staff at 011-317-917-6222.

# NCAA Student Registration

College-bound student-athletes who want to play NCAA sports at a Division I or II school need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org). Students should plan to register during their sophomore year of high school. The information below is intended to help walk students through the registration process.

## Online Registration

The NCAA Eligibility Center has designed [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org) with the student-athlete in mind. This is where students will find the tools and information they need to begin their college experience as a student-athlete. Students should allow at least 45 minutes to register completely. If they need to exit and return at a later time, they can save and exit once their account has been created. Some additional tips are listed below to help walk them through each section of the registration process. If students and parents need more information, they can access the [Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#).

## Account Creation

They will need to provide a valid email address to create an account and begin the registration process. Be sure students provide an email address that will be active after they graduate from high school. This email should be one that they use frequently, because they may receive notices regarding their account. If students have a sibling that has previously registered, they will need to use a different email address than the one on their sibling's account to create their new account.

## About Me

In this section, students will enter their name, address, date of birth and gender.

## My Coursework

Enter the name and location of the high school the student currently attends. If the student has attended more than one school (including summer school) during grades nine, 10, 11 or 12, he or she will need to list those schools. Be sure to include ALL schools, regardless of whether he or she received grades or credits. If a student attended ninth grade at a junior high school located in the same school system in which the student later attended high school, do not list the ninth-grade school. Students must also include information about courses they may have taken through other programs, such as an online school or credit recovery program for a class they did not pass or took to improve a grade.

If students need to add additional schools after they have completed their registration, they can log back in to [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org), navigate to My Planner and select the My Coursework section. Under Schools, there will be a question that asks, "Have you attended any other schools?" They should select Yes to that question and then enter any additional schools or programs they have attended before their full-time enrollment in college.

## My Sport

Select the sport(s) the student plans to participate in at an NCAA Division I or II school. Students also will be asked about any teams outside their high school, such as club teams they have played on, and events they have participated in during their high school career.

## Payment

Students' accounts will be eligible for processing once the registration fee has been paid (or a fee waiver has been submitted, if they are eligible). Payment may be made online by debit, credit card or e-check. The registration fee is \$75 for students in the United States, U.S. territories and Canada (U.S. territories include American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands); and \$130 for all other international students.

All fees are nonrefundable once students have successfully registered. If they completed a duplicate registration and paid their registration fee twice, they may be eligible for a refund of the duplicate registration fee. To receive a refund, they will need to complete and submit an NCAA refund form.

## Fee Waiver

Students are eligible for a waiver of the registration fee if they have received a waiver of the SAT or ACT fee. This is not the same as a U.S. state voucher. Students must have an authorized high school official submit their fee waiver documentation online once they complete their registration.

## ACT

In order to be eligible for an ACT fee waiver, students must meet one of these indicators of economic need:

- Their family receives low-income public assistance;
- Their family income is at or below the Bureau of Labor Statistics Low Standard Budget;
- They are a ward of the state;
- They live in a foster home;
- They are homeless;
- They participate in a free or reduced-price lunch program at school; or
- They participate in a federally funded TRIO Program such as Upward Bound.

## SAT

Students are eligible for consideration for an SAT fee waiver if they are a U.S. citizen or a foreign national taking the SAT in the United States or its territories and they meet one of the following requirements:

- They are enrolled in a program for the economically disadvantaged such as AVID or TRIO;
- Their family's annual income falls within the levels listed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for free or reduced-price lunches;
- Their family receives public assistance;
- Their family lives in federally subsidized public housing; or
- They live in a foster home.

If students are home schooled in the United States or U.S. territories and cannot afford to pay the test fees, they must provide proof of eligibility to their local high school or agency administrator. Only a school or agency administrator can provide students with the fee waiver card for the appropriate test. Students from countries other than the United States or its territories are not eligible for a fee waiver.





## Scholarships

NCAA Divisions I and II schools provide more than \$2.7 billion in athletics scholarships annually to more than 150,000 student-athletes. Division III schools do not offer athletics scholarships.

Only about 2 percent of high school athletes are awarded athletics scholarships to compete in college. Of the student-athletes participating in sports with professional leagues, very few become professional athletes. A college education is the most rewarding benefit of your student-athlete experience.

Division I schools may provide tuition and fees, room and board, books, and other expenses related to attendance at the school. Division II full scholarships cover tuition and fees, room, board and course-related books and supplies. Most student-athletes who receive athletics scholarships receive an amount covering a portion of these costs. Many student-athletes also benefit from academic scholarships, NCAA financial aid programs such as the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund and need-based aid such as Federal Pell Grants. You must report all financial aid you receive to your NCAA school's financial aid office. If you have questions about what financial aid can be accepted, you should contact your NCAA school's financial aid office and athletics department for help.

Division I schools may provide you with multi-year scholarships. Additionally, Division I schools may pay for you to finish your bachelor's or master's degrees after you finish playing NCAA sports.

If a school plans to reduce or not renew your aid, the school must notify you in writing by July 1 and provide an opportunity for you to appeal. In most cases, the head coach decides who receives a scholarship, the scholarship amount and whether it will be renewed.

Contact the NCAA school you hope to attend for more detailed information about NCAA financial aid rules.

## National Letter of Intent

A National Letter of Intent (NLI) is signed by you, agreeing to attend a Division I or II college for one academic year. Participating colleges agree to provide financial aid for a minimum of one academic year to you as long as you are admitted to the school and are eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules.

The NLI is voluntary and not required for you to receive financial aid or participate in sports. Signing an NLI ends the recruiting process because participating schools are prohibited from recruiting student-athletes who have already signed letters with other participating schools.

If you sign an NLI but decide to attend another college, you may request a release from your contract with the school. If you sign an NLI with one school but attend a different school, you lose one full year of eligibility and must complete a full academic year at the new school before being eligible to compete. If you have questions about the NLI, visit the website at [nationalletter.org](http://nationalletter.org).

# Important Terms

**Celebratory Standardized Signing Form:** (A form used by Division III institutions.) The Celebratory Standardized Signing Form is a standard NCAA-provided, nonbinding athletics celebratory signing form after a college-bound student-athlete has been accepted for enrollment at a Division III school.

**Contact:** A contact happens any time a college coach says more than hello during a face-to-face meeting with a student or the student's parents off the college's campus.

**Contact period:** During a contact period, a college coach may have face-to-face contact with a student or a student's parents, watch the student compete or visit the student's high school, and write or telephone the student or the student's parents.

**Dead period:** A college coach may not have any face-to-face contact with a student or the student's parents on or off the college campus at any time during a dead period. The coach may write and call the student or the student's parents during this time.

**Evaluation:** An evaluation happens when a college coach observes a student practicing or competing.

**Evaluation period:** During an evaluation period, a college coach may watch a student compete, visit the student's high school and write or telephone the student or the student's parents. However, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with a student or the student's parents off the college's campus during an evaluation period.

**Financial aid:** (scholarship) Any money a student receives from a college or another source, such as outside loans or grants. Financial aid may be based on athletics ability, financial need or academic achievement.

**Five-year clock:** If a student plays at a Division I school, the student has five calendar-years in which to play four seasons of competition. A student's five-year clock starts when the student enrolls as a full-time student at any college. Thereafter, the clock continues, even if the student spends an academic year in residence as a result of transferring, decides to redshirt, does not attend school or even goes part time during his/her college career.

**Full-time student:** Each school determines what full-time status means. Typically, a student is a full-time student if he/she is enrolled for at least 12 credit hours in a term, but some schools define a full-time student as someone who takes fewer than 12 credit hours in a term.

**International student:** An international student is any student who is enrolled in a secondary school outside the United States.

**Institutional Request List:** An Institutional Request List (IRL) is a list of college-bound student-athletes whom an NCAA Division I and/or II school is interested in recruiting. The action of adding a college-bound student-athlete to the IRL informs the NCAA Eligibility Center of the school's interest in having an academic certification decision for the student-athlete.

**Official commitment:** When a student officially commits to attend a Division I or II college, the student signs a National Letter of Intent, agreeing to attend that school for one academic year.

**Official visit:** During an official visit, the college can pay for transportation to and from the college for a student, lodging and meals (Division I allows for up to three meals per day) for the student and the student's parents or guardians, as well as reasonable entertainment expenses, including three tickets to a home sports event. Before a college may invite a student on an official visit, the student will have to provide the college with a copy of his/her high school transcript and ACT, SAT or PLAN score (test scores are required for Division I only) and register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

**Quiet period:** During this time, a college coach may not have any in-person contact with a student or the student's parents off the college's campus. The coach may not watch the student play or visit the student's high school during this period. The student and his/her parents may visit a college campus during this time. A coach may write or call the student or his/her parents during this time.

**Recruited:** If a college coach calls a student more than once, contacts a student off campus, pays a student's expenses to visit the campus, or in Divisions I and II, issues a National Letter of Intent or a written offer of financial aid, the student is considered to be recruited.

**Recruiting calendar:** NCAA member schools limit recruiting to certain periods during the year. Recruiting calendars promote the well-being of college-bound student-athletes and ensure fairness among schools by defining certain periods during the year in which recruiting may or may not occur in a particular sport.

**Season of competition:** Generally, NCAA rules say that any competition in a season — regardless of the amount of time — counts as having played a season in that sport. If a student plays any time during a season, regardless of how long the student played, it counts as having played for an entire season in that sport. A student's season of competition starts when he/she spends one second in competition on the field, court, gym or track.

**Ten-semester/15-quarter clock:** If a student plays at a Division II or III school, the student has the first 10 semesters or 15 quarters in which he/she is enrolled as a full-time student to complete four seasons of participation. A student uses a semester or quarter any time he/she attends class as a full-time student or is enrolled part time and competes for the school. A student does not use a term if he/she only attends part time with no competition or is not enrolled for a term.

**Two-year college:** Any school where students can earn an Associate of Arts (AA) degree, an Associate of Science (AS) degree or an Associate of Applied Science degree within two years. Some people call these schools community colleges or junior colleges.

**Unofficial visit:** Any visit by a student and the student's parents to a college campus paid for by the student or his/

her parents. The only expense the student may receive from the college is three complimentary admissions to a home athletics contest. The student may make as many unofficial visits as he/she likes and may take those visits at any time. The only time a student cannot talk with a coach during an unofficial visit is during a dead period.

**Verbal commitment:** A verbal commitment happens when a student verbally agrees to play sports for a college before he/she signs or is eligible to sign a National Letter of Intent. The commitment is not binding on the student or the school and can be made at any time.

**Walk-on:** Someone who is not typically recruited by a school to participate in sports and does not receive a scholarship from the school, but who becomes a member of one of the school's athletics teams.

## Resources

As a school counselor, you play an important role in helping students understand the requirements to compete in college sports at an NCAA school. You will find a number of resources on this page.

### For High School Counselors

- High School Portal <https://web3.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/homeAction>
- Online Resources for High School Administrators <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/eligibility-center/high-school-administrators>
- How to Use the High School Portal [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/How\\_and\\_When\\_to\\_Update/PortalInstructionsScreenShots.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/How_and_When_to_Update/PortalInstructionsScreenShots.pdf)
- PIN Reset Form [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/How\\_and\\_When\\_to\\_Update/PINRequestForm.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/How_and_When_to_Update/PINRequestForm.pdf)
- Tutorial about High School Tasks [http://fs.ncaa.org/docs/eligibility\\_center/High\\_School\\_Tasks.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/docs/eligibility_center/High_School_Tasks.pdf)
- Fee Waiver Submission [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Student\\_Registration\\_Info/FeeWaiverSubmission\\_screenshots.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Registration_Info/FeeWaiverSubmission_screenshots.pdf)
- Initial-Eligibility Rules <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/initial-eligibility-rules.pdf>
- Your Path to the Student-Athlete Experience for High School Counselors [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Your\\_Path\\_Presentation\\_for\\_High\\_School\\_Counselors.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Your_Path_Presentation_for_High_School_Counselors.pdf)
- How to Navigate the NCAA Process [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Important\\_New\\_Rules/How\\_to\\_Navigate\\_the\\_NCAA\\_Process.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Important_New_Rules/How_to_Navigate_the_NCAA_Process.pdf)

- 2.3 or Take a Knee Downloads (posters, screen savers, yearbook ads, etc.) <http://www.ncaa.org/static/2point3/>
- Division I Academic Requirements <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-i-sports>
- Division II Academic Requirements <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-ii-sports>

### For Students

- NCAA Eligibility Center Registration Website [http://web3.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA\\_EMS/NCAA.jsp](http://web3.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp)
- Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete <http://www.ncaapublications.com/DownloadPublication.aspx?download=CBSA16.pdf>
- Initial-Eligibility Brochure <http://www.ncaapublications.com/p-4391-2015-16-ncaa-initial-eligibility-brochure-road-map-to-initial-eligibility.aspx>
- Want to Play College Sports? <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future>
- Your Path to the Student-Athlete Experience [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Student\\_Resources/Path\\_to\\_the\\_Student-Athlete\\_Experience\\_for\\_PSA.mp4](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/Path_to_the_Student-Athlete_Experience_for_PSA.mp4)
- FAQs <http://www.ncaa.org/studentfaq>

