NCAA Eligibility Basics

<https://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/prepare/athletes/clearinghouse>

FAQs about the NCAA Eligibility Center

Student-athletes must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center to be eligible to play NCAA Division I or II sports in college. Athletes playing in Division III do not have to register.

**What is the NCAA Eligibility Center?**

**The NCAA Eligibility Center certifies whether prospective college athletes are eligible to play sports at NCAA Division I or II institutions.** It does this by reviewing the student-athlete's academic record, SAT® or ACT scores, and amateur status to ensure conformity with NCAA rules.

**What are NCAA Divisions I, II, and III?**

The NCAA is the governing body of many intercollegiate sports. Each college regulated by the NCAA has established rules on eligibility, recruiting and financial aid and falls into one of the three membership divisions (Divisions I, II and III). Divisions are based on college size and the scope of their athletic programs and scholarships.

**When should students register?**

The NCAA recommends that student-athletes register at the **beginning of their junior year** in high school, but many students register after their junior year. There is no registration deadline, but students must be cleared by the Eligibility Center before they receive athletic scholarships or compete at a Division I or II institution.

**How do students register?**

Students must register online at the [NCAA Eligibility Center](http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp). They will have to enter personal information, answer questions about their course work and sports participation outside of high school and pay a registration fee.

**Can students have the registration fee waived?**

Students who have received a waiver for the SAT or ACT are eligible for a waiver of the registration fee. The student's counselor must submit confirmation of the student's test fee waiver. Go to the [NCAA Eligibility Center High School Portal](https://web1.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/homeAction) for more information.

**What records does the Eligibility Center require?**

Students should arrange to have you send their high school transcript as soon as they have completed at least six semesters of high school. The transcript must be mailed directly from their high school. They must also arrange to have their SAT or ACT test scores reported directly by the testing company to the Eligibility Center.  Students can arrange this when they register for the tests.

**You are responsible for sending in students' final transcripts and** **proof of graduation** at the end of their senior year.

**How often can students update their athletics participation information?**

Students can update the information on the athletics participation section online as often as they want (and should update it regularly), up until the time when they request a final certification of their status. At that point — usually three to four months before enrolling in college — students must finalize their information.

**What are the NCAA academic eligibility requirements?**

To play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution, the student must:

* Complete a certain number of high school core courses (defined below).
* Earn a certain minimum grade point average in these core courses.
* Earn a certain minimum score on the SAT or ACT.
* Graduate from high school.

For more information, see the NCAA's *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*, in the [Publications section of the NCAA website](http://www.ncaapublications.com/).

**What are core courses?**

This is the name that the NCAA gives to high school courses that meet certain academic criteria specified by the association. Students must complete a certain number of core courses for NCAA Division I and II eligibility.

**How are high school courses classified as core courses?**

All participating high schools submit lists of the courses that they offer that meet NCAA core-course criteria. If approved, the courses are added to a database that the NCAA Eligibility Center maintains. You can check this database or view a list of approved core courses on the [NCAA Eligibility Center High School Portal](https://web1.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/homeAction) to see whether your student-athletes are enrolled in courses that will count toward NCAA eligibility.

It is often the counselor who provides the NCAA with the list of your school's core courses and updates it annually. The NCAA may ask for more information before approving a core course.

**What are the NCAA amateurism eligibility requirements?**

To play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution, the student athlete must follow NCAA amateurism rules about receiving a salary or prize money for athletic participation, playing with a professional team and other areas. For more information, see the *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*.

**Keep in mind**

**The best way for students to prepare for a future in college athletics is to complete the approved core courses and earn appropriate grades in them.** Indeed, more students fail to qualify to play NCAA sports because of lack of appropriate course work than for low test scores.

Make sure your athletes are enrolled in the courses on your high school's core-course list, and also know the eligibility requirements of the [NCAA Eligibility Center](http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp). Then make sure your athletes are taking the necessary courses, earning the necessary grades and doing anything else they must to stay on track for NCAA eligibility.