



Eligibility Center



**2018-19** GUIDE FOR  
**FOUR-YEAR TRANSFERS**

FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES AT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

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## WHAT SHOULD I THINK ABOUT BEFORE TRANSFERRING?

Student-athlete success on the field, in the classroom and in life is at the heart of the NCAA's mission. Your college experience should give you the opportunity to receive a quality education and take your place among the student-athletes who have attended college, played sports, received their degrees and gone on to make important contributions to society.

NCAA transfer rules are designed to help student-athletes such as you make sensible decisions about the best place to earn a degree and develop athletic skills. The decision to transfer to another school involves important and sometimes difficult choices. Make sure you understand the rules, the options and the potential consequences of your decision. You do not want to risk your education or your chance to play NCAA sports.

# FOCUS ON YOUR DEGREE

More than 480,000 student-athletes compete in NCAA sports but few move on to compete at the professional or Olympic level. For the rest, the experiences of college sports and the life lessons they learn along the way will help them as they pursue careers in other fields.

Professional opportunities are extremely limited and the likelihood of a college athlete becoming a professional athlete is low. The likelihood of an NCAA student-athlete earning a college degree is much greater: Graduation success rates are 86 percent in Division I, 71 percent in Division II and 87 percent in Division III.

## PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE ATHLETES WHO BECOME PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES

	MEN'S BASKETBALL	WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL	BASEBALL	MEN'S ICE HOCKEY	MEN'S SOCCER
High School Student-Athletes	550,305	430,368	1,057,382	491,790	35,210	450,234
NCAA Student-Athletes	17,712	16,532	73,063	34,980	4,199	24,986
NCAA Student-Athletes Drafted	50	34	253	735	60	78
*Percent High School to NCAA	3.2%	3.8%	6.9%	7.1%	11.9%	5.5%
*Percent NCAA to Professional	1.2%	0.9%	1.6%	9.5%	6.4%	1.4%

\*Percentages based on estimated data.

# LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

If you decide to transfer, the NCAA wants to help your education and sports participation continue as smoothly as possible. But you have a responsibility as well. Learn as much as you can to protect your eligibility. While staff at the NCAA and its member schools can give you advice, you need to understand how transfer rules apply to you before you decide to move to a new school.

This guide introduces you to the key issues involved in transferring. But before you transfer, you may need more information. Key people, including your coach or athletics compliance officer, can help you successfully work through the process. Take advantage of all the information available to you.

- Visit the NCAA website at [ncaa.org/transfer](http://ncaa.org/transfer) for FAQs and printable resources on key topics.
- Talk to people at your current school, including staff in the athletics department or compliance office.
- Review the permission to contact and/or notification of transfer guidelines on [page 13](#).
- Call the conference of your new school.
- Call the NCAA at 317-917-6008, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time.

# TRANSFER CHECKLIST

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## ADMISSIONS

Have you applied to the admissions department at the school you are transferring to?

- You may apply to the admissions department of your new school without notifying the athletics department at your current school.

## INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

Have you registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center?

- To play at a Division I or Division II school, you must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org).
- See [page 9](#) for more information.

## CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

Do you have any remaining eligibility to compete in your sport after transferring?

- Student-athletes have four seasons to compete in each sport.
- See [page 21](#) for more information.

## TRANSFER ELIGIBILITY

In most cases, student-athletes who transfer to an NCAA school must sit out of competition for a year.

- You may be able to compete immediately if you meet a transfer exception.
- See [pages 16 to 19](#) for more information.

## PERMISSION TO CONTACT AND/OR DIVISION I NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER

Have you initiated the proper transfer protocol on campus with your compliance staff?

- Coaches and athletics staff at your new school may not talk to you about transferring until your current school is made aware and you have been granted permission to contact. Effective Oct. 15, 2018, for Division I student-athletes, your request for a Notification of Transfer will require the compliance office to add your name to the national transfer database within two business days of receipt of your request to transfer to become visible to other NCAA schools.
- See [page 13](#) for more information.

## OTHER TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

Do you meet other transfer requirements?

- If you have the permission to contact and/or Division I notification of transfer already in place from your current school and your information is entered into the transfer database, your new NCAA school will need to certify you meet all applicable NCAA, school and conference transfer requirements for that specific institution. The compliance office will need to determine if you are eligible when you arrive at your new school.
- Additional NCAA, school or conference transfer rules and/or academic progress rules may need to be considered; please consult with your compliance officer on campus to learn more about your specific situation.
- See [page 14](#) for more information.

# HOW DO THE TRANSFER RULES APPLY TO ME?

You may be wondering how soon you can compete after you transfer. Before you can answer that question, you need to follow these steps to understand how the transfer rules apply to your situation:

1. **Determine if you are a transfer student-athlete.**
2. **Decide where you are going.**
3. **Understand your initial-eligibility status.**
4. **Make sure you have registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center, if needed.**
5. **Ask your current school for a permission-to-contact letter.** Effective Oct. 15, 2018, a current NCAA Division I student-athlete will initiate the notification-of-transfer process through their current compliance office if they are wanting to contact another school regarding athletics.

As a reminder, this guide is for student-athletes transferring from a four-year institution. If you are transferring from a two-year institution (junior or community college), please review the PDF titled “Guide For Two-Year Transfers,” located at [ncaa.org/transfer](http://ncaa.org/transfer).

## 1. DETERMINE IF YOU ARE A TRANSFER STUDENT-ATHLETE

To learn which transfer rules apply to your situation, you first need to determine whether your situation meets the common definition of a transfer. It may seem fairly simple, but you need to answer this basic question before you can continue.

### How do I know if I am a transfer student-athlete?

Ask yourself if you have met any of the conditions — called “transfer triggers” — of a typical transfer situation:

1. Have you been a full-time student at a two- or four-year college during a regular academic term? Classes taken during summer terms do not count.
2. Have you practiced with a college team?
3. Have you practiced or competed while enrolled as a part-time student?
4. Have you received athletically related financial aid from a college while attending summer school?
5. If you attended a Division I school, have you received any type of financial aid from a college while attending summer school?

If you answered “yes” to any of those questions, you are likely a transfer student-athlete because you have met conditions that have triggered your transfer status. Now you need to learn how to meet the transfer rules so you can play your sport at a new NCAA school.

If you answered “no” to all those questions, you may not be considered a transfer student-athlete and the transfer rules may not apply to you. Contact the athletics compliance office at your new school and ask it to certify your eligibility status.

## CASE STUDY

*Brady was recruited to play basketball at an NCAA school. He enrolled in classes as a full-time student and attended class on the first day of the semester.*

*On the fourth day of class, Brady went to the registrar’s office and dropped from 12 credit hours to nine, making him a part-time student for the rest of the semester.*

*At the end of the semester, Brady decided that he wanted to go to a different NCAA school.*

### Is Brady a transfer student-athlete?

Yes. The transfer rules applied to Brady the minute he became a full-time student and went to class on the first day of the semester. Brady must request notification of transfer and/or permission to contact from his original school’s compliance office before he can speak to the coach at the new school.



## 2. DECIDE WHERE YOU ARE GOING

Now that you know whether you are a transfer student-athlete, you need to decide which school you want to attend. As you think about new schools, keep in mind academics are just as important as athletics. Your new school should help you meet all your goals – on the field, in the classroom and in life.

Each NCAA school is part of a division and a conference, and has its own admission policies. Transfer rules are different for each NCAA division and may be more restrictive for some conferences.

### Learn more about your new school's division

As you research schools, take time to learn more about each NCAA division. Schools in Divisions I and II may offer athletics scholarships to cover tuition, fees, room and board, and books. Division III schools do not award athletics scholarships but do offer financial aid based on academics or need.

See [page 8](#) for more on the NCAA's three divisions.

### Learn more about your new school's conference

In some cases, conference transfer rules can be more restrictive than NCAA rules, so you need to have a clear picture before you make a move. For instance, conferences may differ on how long you must attend a new school before you may compete.

See NCAA Conferences on [page 25](#) for a link to conferences' websites or visit [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org).

### Learn more about your new school's admission policies

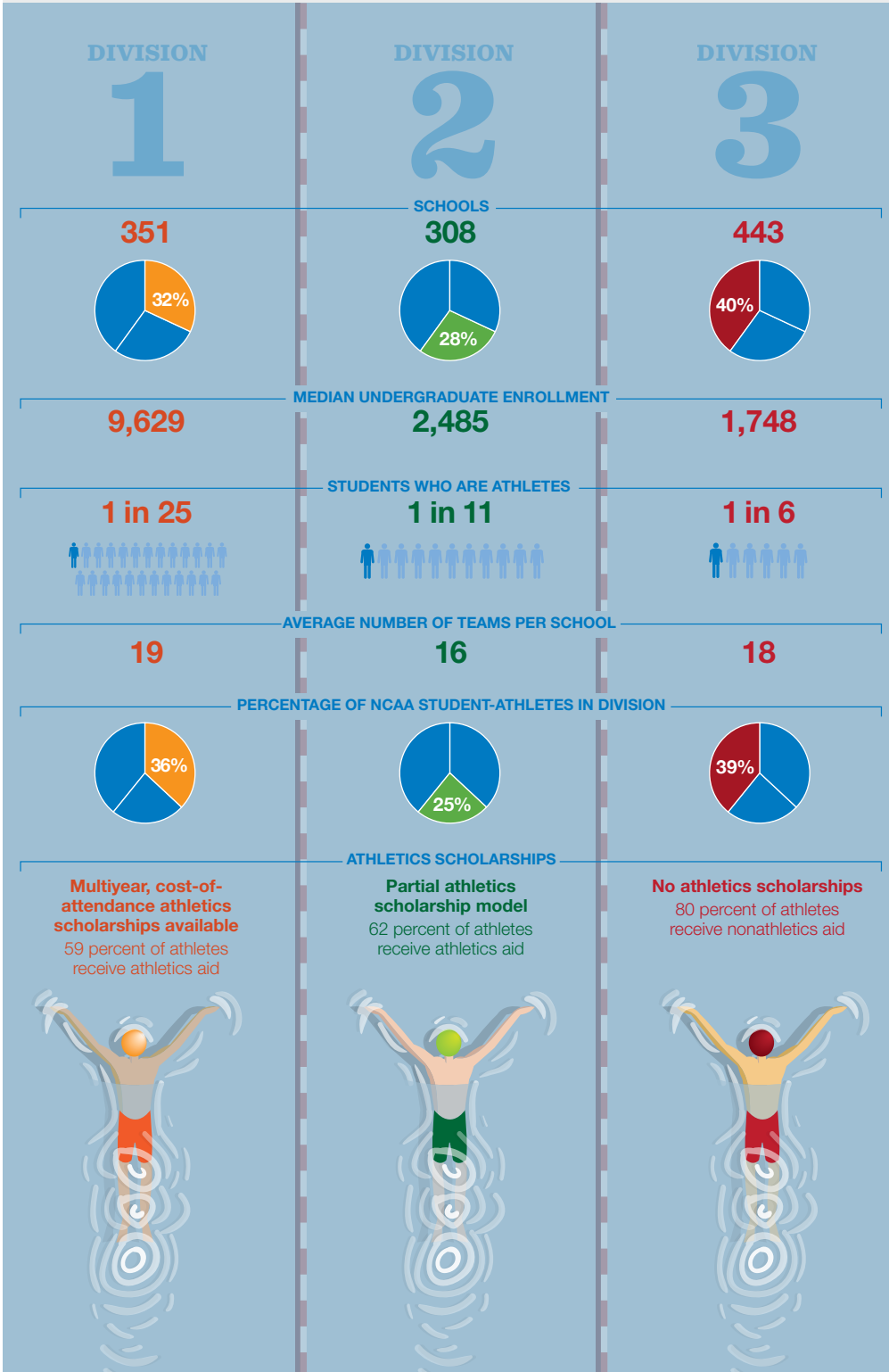
Meeting the NCAA transfer rules does not guarantee you will be admitted to a new school. You also need to meet the school's admission requirements — including academic standards — before you can play NCAA sports.

- Visit [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org) for a full list of NCAA schools, sorted by division, sport and conference. You also will find a database to help you find the names, addresses and phone numbers for athletics contacts at each school.
- Talk to the academic, admissions and financial aid offices at the school you wish to attend to make sure the school will be a good fit for you.
- Once you get written permission to contact from your current school or initiate the notification-of-transfer process and your information is entered into the national transfer database, talk to the athletics compliance office at the school you wish to attend about your transfer options. Learn more about permission to contact on [page 13](#).
- Contact the NCAA national office or the appropriate conference office for more information about your specific case.



# Our Three Divisions

The NCAA's three divisions were created in 1973 to align like-minded campuses in the areas of philosophy, competition and opportunity.



## What are the eligibility requirements in each division?

College-bound students who want to compete at a Division I or Division II school must meet standards set by NCAA members. For Division III, athletes must meet the admissions standards set by the school. Eligibility standards can be found at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org).

## How is each division governed?

NCAA schools develop and approve legislation for their own division. Groups of presidents and chancellors lead each division in the form of committees with regularly scheduled meetings.

## Did you know?



**Division I** student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student body.

**Division II** is the only division with schools in Alaska, Puerto Rico and Canada.



**Division III's** largest school has 24,702 undergraduates. The smallest? 284.

Learn more at [ncaa.org/about](http://ncaa.org/about).

NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Updated February 2018.



### 3. UNDERSTAND YOUR INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY STATUS

Once you know whether you are a transfer student-athlete and have identified the school you want to attend, you need to find out what your initial-eligibility status is for your new school.

#### Why do I need to know my initial-eligibility status?

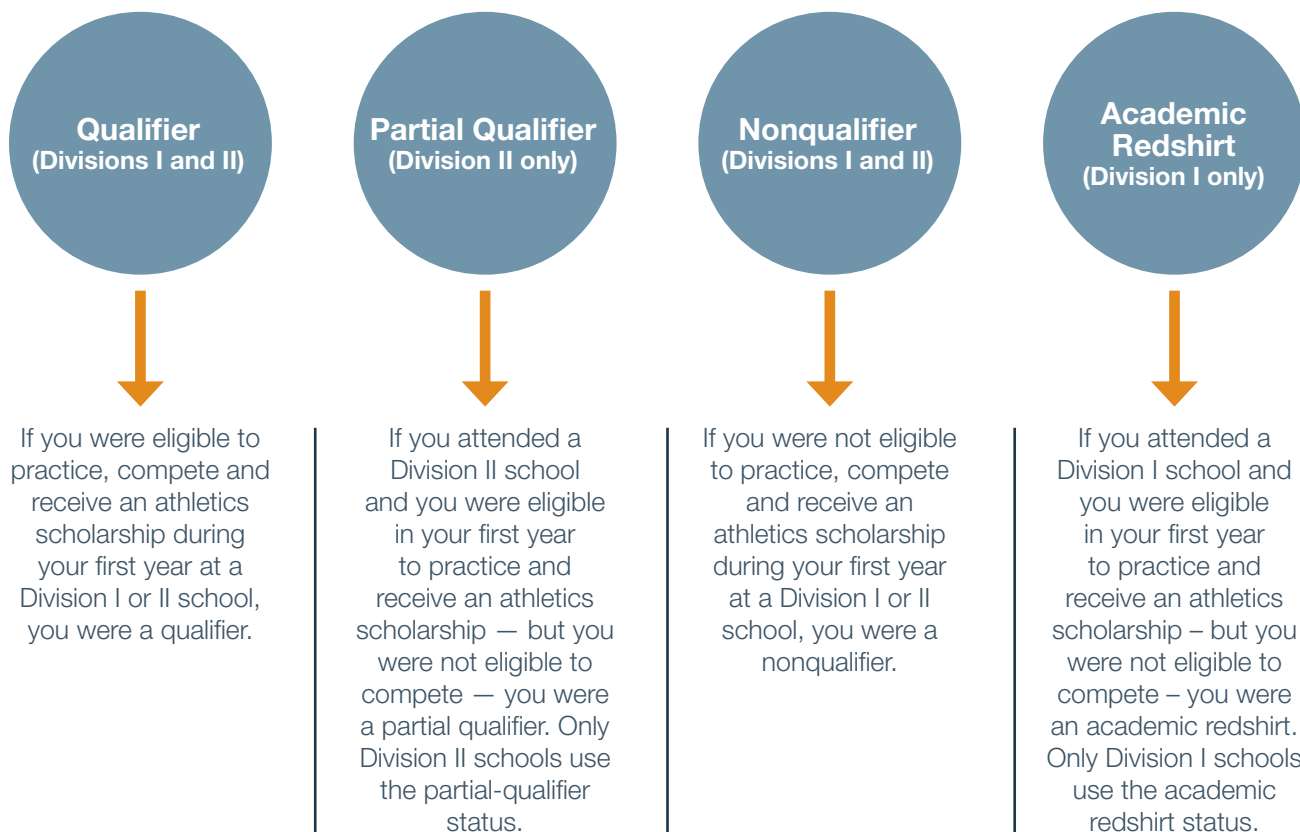
In part, your initial-eligibility status determines which transfer rules apply to you and how many seasons of competition you may have remaining to play at your new school.

#### What is initial-eligibility status?

High school student-athletes who want to compete in NCAA sports during their first year at a Division I or II school need to meet certain division-wide academic standards. Your initial-eligibility status indicates whether you met the academic standards to compete in your first year at a Division I or II school.

If you registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center as a high school student and your first college enrollment was at a Division I or II school, the NCAA Eligibility Center assigned you an initial-eligibility status. The NCAA Eligibility Center determined your initial-eligibility status based on the core courses you took in high school, the grades and number of credits you earned in those courses and your scores on standardized tests. If you do not have an initial-eligibility status, talk to the athletics compliance office at your new school.

#### There are four possible initial-eligibility statuses:



Division III schools set their own admissions and eligibility standards. If your first college enrollment was at a Division III school, you probably were not assigned an initial-eligibility status by the NCAA Eligibility Center. If you are thinking of transferring to a Division III school, you need to meet the admission requirements of the school you plan to attend.



### **Division I Qualifier Before Aug. 1, 2016**

If you first enrolled in college before Aug. 1, 2016, you had to meet all of the following requirements to be a Division I qualifier, allowing you to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year:

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

### **Division I Qualifier After Aug. 1, 2016**

If you first enrolled in college after Aug. 1, 2016, you had to meet all of the following requirements to be a Division I qualifier, allowing you to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year:

- Complete 16 NCAA-approved core courses in high school:
  - o Four years of English.
  - o Three years of math (Algebra I or higher).
  - o Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
  - o One additional year of English, math or natural/physical science.
  - o Two years of social science.
  - o Four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy.
- Complete 10 of the required 16 core courses before the start of your seventh semester of high school. Seven of the 10 core courses must include English, math and natural or physical science.
- Earn at least a 2.3 GPA in core courses.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale, which balances test scores and core-course GPA.
- Graduate from high school.

### Division I Academic Redshirt

If you first enrolled in college after Aug. 1, 2016, you had to meet all of the following requirements to be a Division I academic redshirt, allowing you to practice and receive an athletics scholarship, but not compete, during your first academic term:

- Complete 16 NCAA-approved core courses in high school:
  - Four years of English.
  - Three years of math (Algebra I 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.
- Earn at least a 2.0 GPA in core courses.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale, which balances test scores and core-course GPA.\*
- Graduate from high school.

### Division I Nonqualifier

If you did not meet the Division I qualifier requirements, you were not eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at a Division I school.

### Division II Qualifier Before Aug. 1, 2018

You had to meet all the following requirements to be a Division II qualifier, allowing you to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year:

- Complete 16 NCAA-approved core courses in high school:
  - Three years of English.
  - Two years of math (Algebra I 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.
- Earn at least a 2.0 GPA in core courses.
- Earn an SAT combined score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68\*.
- Graduate from high school.



### **Division II Partial Qualifier After Aug. 1, 2018**

If you graduated high school and met one of the following requirements, you were a Division II partial qualifier, allowing you to practice and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year, but not allowing you to compete:

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

### **Division II Qualifier After Aug. 1, 2018**

You had to meet all the following requirements to be a Division II qualifier, allowing you to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year:

- Complete 16 NCAA-approved core courses in high school:
  - o Four years of English.
  - o Three years of math (Algebra I or higher).
  - o Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
  - o One additional year of English, math or natural/physical science.
  - o Two years of social science.
  - o Four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy.
- Earn at least a 2.2 GPA in your core courses.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division II sliding scale.\*

### **Division II Partial Qualifier After Aug. 1, 2018**

You had to meet all the following requirements to be a Division II partial qualifier, allowing you to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year:

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

*\*The minimum combined SAT score of 820 applies to tests taken before March 1, 2016. The minimum combined SAT score required for tests taken on or after March 2016 will be evaluated based on the concordance established by the College Board.*

## Division II Nonqualifier

If you did not meet the Division II qualifier or partial-qualifier requirements, you were not eligible to practice, receive an athletics scholarship or compete during your first year at a Division II school.

### 4. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE REGISTERED WITH THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

By now you should know whether you are a transfer student-athlete, which school you want to attend and what your initial-eligibility status is. If you want to transfer to a Division I or II school and you have never registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center, you need to visit [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org) to register before you continue the transfer process.

Division III schools set their own admissions and eligibility standards. If your first college enrollment was at a Division III school, you probably have not registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. If you are transferring from a Division III school to a Division I or II school, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

If you have not registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center, your initial-eligibility status is nonqualifier. Schools cannot assume that you would have been a qualifier or partial qualifier.

### 5. WHEN CAN I CONTACT NEW SCHOOLS AND SPEAK WITH THEIR ATHLETICS STAFF REGARDING A POTENTIAL TRANSFER?

- You shall not talk to another school's coach directly or indirectly until you understand all applicable NCAA transfer rules, including obtaining the permission to contact or initiating the notification of transfer from your current school, and your information is entered in the national transfer database.
- You should only consider asking for permission to contact or initiating the notification of transfer when you are ready to begin the process.
- Impact to playing time, roster spot and/or athletics aid may be a result when beginning the transfer process, so please consider consulting with your coaching staff, compliance staff and director of athletics throughout the process. Per NCAA Bylaw 15, Financial Aid, you may request a hearing opportunity with the financial aid authority on campus if your athletics aid is to be reduced, canceled or not renewed. Please speak with your compliance office to learn more about these policies and procedures.
- You may write to a new school to let them know you are interested in transferring, but the new school cannot discuss transfer opportunities with you until they can verify the proper permission to contact, or notification of transfer is validated and your information is entered in the national transfer database.
- You can speak with departments other than the athletics department at a new school at any time. Examples include admissions, registrar and financial aid office.
- Once permission to contact or notification of transfer is in place and your information is entered in the national transfer database, all applicable NCAA recruiting rules will continue to apply (e.g., tryout rules, official visit rules, etc.).

## CASE STUDY

*Rachel attended a Division I school as a freshman and practiced with the swimming and diving team. Before swimming in a meet, she was cut from the team.*

*After spending a summer at the beach, Rachel decided she wanted to transfer to a Division II school and join the swimming and diving team.*

**Does Rachel need to ask the Division I school for a notification of transfer/permission to contact through its compliance office?**

Yes. Because Rachel practiced with the swim team at the Division I school, she was considered a member of the team and a student-athlete, even though she never participated in a meet.

## Transferring from a current NCAA Division I school

Per NCAA Division I Bylaw 13.1.1.3, you shall request written permission to contact from your current school to permit a new NCAA school any direct or indirect contact. When you are ready to begin, please contact your current director of athletics or compliance office with a written request. Your request shall be either granted or denied within seven business days. If denied, you may request a hearing opportunity with your current school to appeal the denied decision. Please ask your compliance office for a copy of your school's hearing opportunity policies and procedures, including a deadline by which you must request your hearing.

- *Effective Oct. 15, 2018 – “Notification of Transfer”*  
An NCAA Division I student-athlete shall request a “notification of transfer” through their current compliance office. A student-athlete may initiate the notification-of-transfer process by providing his or her institution with a written notification of transfer at any time. The student-athlete's institution shall enter his or her information into the national transfer database within two business days of receipt of the student-athlete's request. Your current NCAA Division I institution shall have written policies related to the implications of a student-athlete providing written notification of transfer, including a description of services and benefits (e.g., academic support services, access to athletics facilities, etc.) and impact to your current athletics aid agreement that will change upon receipt of the student-athlete's request for notification of transfer. Such policies shall be published and generally available to student-athletes (e.g., student-athlete handbook or school website). Please note that being placed in this notification-to-transfer database does not indicate the student-athlete is eligible at the new NCAA school upon transferring. The compliance office at your new school will still need to perform a transfer background check to certify both transfer and remaining eligibility.

## Transferring from a current NCAA Division II school

Per NCAA Division II Bylaw 13.1.1.2, a student-athlete shall request written permission to contact from your current school to permit a new NCAA school any direct or indirect contact. When you are ready to begin, please contact your current director of athletics or compliance office with a written request. Your request shall be either granted or denied within 14 calendar days. If denied, you may request a hearing opportunity with your current school to appeal the denial. Please ask your compliance office for a copy of your school's hearing opportunity policies and procedures, including a deadline by which you must request your hearing. If permission is not granted, the new NCAA school shall not encourage the transfer and shall not provide athletically related financial assistance to the student-athlete until the student-athlete has attended the new NCAA school for at least one academic year.

## Transferring from a current NCAA Division III school

Per NCAA Division III Bylaw 13.1.1.2, a student-athlete shall request written permission to contact from your current school to permit a new NCAA school any direct or indirect contact. When you are ready to begin, please contact your current director of athletics or compliance office with a written request. Your request shall be either granted or denied within seven business days. If denied, you may request a

### CASE STUDY

*Nolan attended a Division III school as a freshman and sophomore. Nolan practiced and competed on its men's lacrosse team.*

*Before the start of his junior year, Nolan decided to transfer to another Division III school to pursue a degree not available at his original Division III school.*

#### **Does Nolan need to ask his first school for a written permission-to-contact letter?**

No. Because Nolan is transferring from a Division III school to another Division III school, he may issue his own self-release to allow another Division III school to contact him about transferring.



hearing opportunity with your current school to appeal the denial. Please ask your compliance office for a copy of your school's hearing opportunity policies and procedures, including a deadline by which you must request your hearing. If permission is not granted, the new NCAA school shall not encourage the transfer and, specifically, a new NCAA Division I or Division II school shall not provide athletically related financial assistance to the student-athlete until the student-athlete has attended the new NCAA Division I or Division II school for at least one academic year.

- If you are a current NCAA Division III student-athlete wishing to contact another NCAA Division III school, please visit [ncaa.org/recruiting](https://www.ncaa.org/recruiting) to download the NCAA Division III self-release form. This form will contain instructions on how to complete and submit to the new NCAA Division III school. If the initial 30-day contact period expires after submitting the first form, and the student-athlete is still undecided, you must submit a second self-release form, which then requires the new NCAA Division III school to notify the current school of this recruiting activity.

### **Transferring from a current NAIA school**

NCAA recruiting rules require any NAIA student-athlete wishing to contact an NCAA Division I or Division III school to first obtain a permission to contact from their current NAIA school. Please consult with the director of athletics at your NAIA school for your request when ready. You may also write to any NCAA Division I or Division III school to request they ask your current NAIA school for a permission to contact, if necessary. If permission-to-contact is not granted, the new NCAA Division I or Division III school may not encourage the transfer.

For any NAIA student-athlete wishing to contact an NCAA Division II school, permission to contact is not required to begin speaking with the NCAA Division II school. However, if the NCAA Division II school chooses to begin recruiting you, it is obligated by NCAA recruiting rules to notify your NAIA school of any recruiting activity.



# WHEN CAN I PLAY?

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Generally, you need to spend one academic year at your new school as a full-time student before you are eligible to compete. This time is called an academic year of residence and is designed to allow you to become comfortable in your new environment.

Requiring student-athletes to sit out of competition for a year after transferring encourages them to make decisions motivated by academics as well as athletics. Most student-athletes who are not eligible to compete immediately benefit from a year to adjust to their new school and focus on their classes. Student-athletes who must sit out for a year at their new school may practice with their new team and receive an athletics scholarship if they were academically eligible when they left their previous school. To confirm, please reach out to your compliance office on campus.

For your academic year of residence to count, you must attend classes only at the school where you plan to compete and you must be a full-time student (generally at least 12 credit hours). You cannot meet this requirement by attending your new school part time or by not attending school at all. Each school determines its own full-time status, so check with the athletics compliance office at your new school to find out how many credit hours you need to take.

For a semester or quarter to count toward your academic year of residence, you must enroll before the 12th day of class of that academic term.

## Are there any exceptions?

There are a number of transfer exceptions that could allow you to practice, compete or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at your new school. Remember, other school or conference rules also may affect your timeline.

## How do I find out if I qualify for an exception?

Once it is permissible for you to speak with another institution (see page 13), talk to the athletics compliance office at your new school about whether you qualify for a transfer exception. Your new school will decide if you qualify for a transfer exception.

## Basic restrictions for transfer exceptions

There are several basic restrictions for transfer exceptions:

- If you were a partial qualifier or a nonqualifier and decide to transfer during your first year, you must spend at least one academic year of residence before you can use a transfer exception. Learn more about your initial-eligibility status on [pages 9 to 12](#).

## CASE STUDY

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*Kyle transferred to a Division I university before the beginning of the school year and was required to complete an academic year of residence. He completed 12 credit hours in the fall term and 12 credit hours in the spring term. At the school he is transferring to, students who take 12 credit hours are considered full-time students.*

### Did Kyle complete his academic year of residence?

*Yes. Since Kyle completed two full-time semesters (12 + 12), he satisfied the full-time requirement for the year.*

- If you signed a National Letter of Intent (NLI) and transfer during your first year as a full-time college student, you may not be able to compete at your new school for a certain period of time. Learn more about the NLI on [page 22](#).
- You may not use an exception if you are currently completing an academic year of residence at your current school.
- If you are a baseball or basketball student-athlete meeting a transfer exception but are transferring to a Division I school at the start of winter or spring term, the earliest you would be eligible to compete would be the following fall term. This midyear transfer application may not apply if you are a Division I graduate transfer, so check with your compliance office if you are transferring upon graduating.
- If you are a tennis student-athlete meeting a transfer exception but are transferring to a Division I school at the start of winter or spring term, the earliest you would be eligible to compete would be the following fall term if you have competed or received an athletics scholarship from your current school during the same academic year.

## CASE STUDY

*Megan transferred to an NCAA school and is sitting out a year. At the NCAA school, students with 12 credit hours are considered full-time students.*

*Megan completed 12 hours in the fall term at the NCAA school. In the spring, she enrolled for nine hours and was considered a part-time student.*

### **Did Megan complete her academic year of residence?**

No. Megan did not complete two semesters as a full-time student. She must still complete a second semester as a full-time student before she has fulfilled her academic year of residence.





# TRANSFER EXCEPTIONS FOR DIVISIONS I AND II SCHOOLS

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If you transfer from a four-year school to an NCAA Division I or II school, you may use an exception to compete immediately if you meet one of the following conditions and receive certification from your compliance office on campus.

1. **This is your first transfer.**
2. **You return to your first school without participating in sports at the second school.**
3. **Your sport is dropped or is not sponsored at your current school.**
4. **You never have been recruited.**
5. **You have not participated in your sport for two years.**

## 1. THIS IS YOUR FIRST TRANSFER

If you have never transferred from a four-year school and are not planning to compete at a Division I school in the sports of football, baseball, basketball and men's ice hockey, you may request use of a one-time transfer exception to compete immediately at a Division I or Division II school. See additional rules for football, baseball, basketball and men's ice hockey below on this page.

To qualify for this exception, you must meet all the following conditions:

- You are in good academic standing and are making progress toward your degree at your current school.
- You would have been considered academically eligible to compete had you stayed at your current school.
- You have a written release agreement from your current school stating it does not object to you receiving a transfer exception.

If your current school is not willing to provide you a one-time transfer exception, you may be entitled to a hearing by a committee not involved in athletics at your school, such as the office of student affairs, the office of the dean of students or a committee comprised of the faculty athletics representative, student-athletes and nonathletics faculty or staff members. If you attend a Division I school and your school does not respond to your written request for a one-time transfer exception within seven business days, NCAA rules require your school to grant you a transfer exception. For Division II, the school must respond within 14 consecutive days.

If this is your first time transferring from a four-year school and you are planning to land at a Division I school for baseball, basketball or men's ice hockey, you may not use the one-time transfer exception unless you were considered both nonrecruited by your original

## CASE STUDY

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*Billy attended a four-year college for one year and played football. His GPA was 1.79 after completing his first academic year, which did not meet that school's requirement to be eligible for the next year. So, Billy transferred to a Division II school.*

### Is Billy eligible to play right away?

No. Billy does not meet the requirements for any of the exceptions. He cannot use the one-time transfer exception because he was not in good academic standing at the previous four-year school and would not have been eligible to compete had he remained at the first school. Before he can play, Billy must spend one academic year of residence at his transfer school.

four-year school and to have never received an athletics scholarship. If you are a Division I football student-athlete, you may use the one-time transfer exception only if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You are transferring from a Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) school to a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) school and you have two seasons of competition eligibility remaining.
- You are transferring from an FCS school that offers athletics scholarships to an FCS school that does not offer athletics scholarships.
- This is your first time transferring, you were considered nonrecruited by your original four-year school, and you never received an athletics scholarship.

## **2. YOU RETURN TO YOUR FIRST SCHOOL WITHOUT PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS AT THE SECOND SCHOOL**

If you participate in sports at a Division I or II school, enroll at a second four-year school and then return to the first school, you may use an exception to compete immediately at the first school if you did not practice or compete at the second school.

## **3. YOUR SPORT IS DROPPED OR IS NOT SPONSORED AT YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL**

If you are transferring to a Division I or II school after your current school drops your sport, you may use an exception to compete immediately. You may use this exception only if you transfer after your current school publicly announces it will drop your sport.

If you are transferring to a Division I or II school from any current school that didn't sponsor your sport, you may use the not-sponsored sport exception provided this is your first time transferring from a four-year school.

## **4. YOU NEVER HAVE BEEN RECRUITED**

You may use an exception to compete immediately if you transfer to the certifying school and *all* of the following conditions are met:

- You were not recruited by the certifying school.
  - You have been recruited if a college coach contacts you off campus, pays your expenses to visit the campus or, in Divisions I and II, issues you a National Letter of Intent or a written offer of financial aid.
- You have not received any athletically related financial assistance.
- You have not competed for any previous institution and have not engaged in other countable athletically related activities in intercollegiate athletics beyond a 14-consecutive-day period at any previous institution.

Your current school can tell you more about your recruiting status.

### **CASE STUDY**

*Dauber, a qualifier, is a freshman soccer player who attends a Division I school. He just finished the fall semester and played in only one game. Dauber's coach is unhappy with his ability, so Dauber wants to transfer to another Division I school.*

#### **Can Dauber use a transfer exception?**

Yes, because Dauber is a qualifier, he may ask to use a transfer exception during his first academic year. Because this is his first time transferring from a four-year school, Dauber would ask his current compliance office for the one-time transfer exception, provided he is in good academic standing and his original school does not object.

## 5. YOU HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN YOUR SPORT FOR TWO YEARS

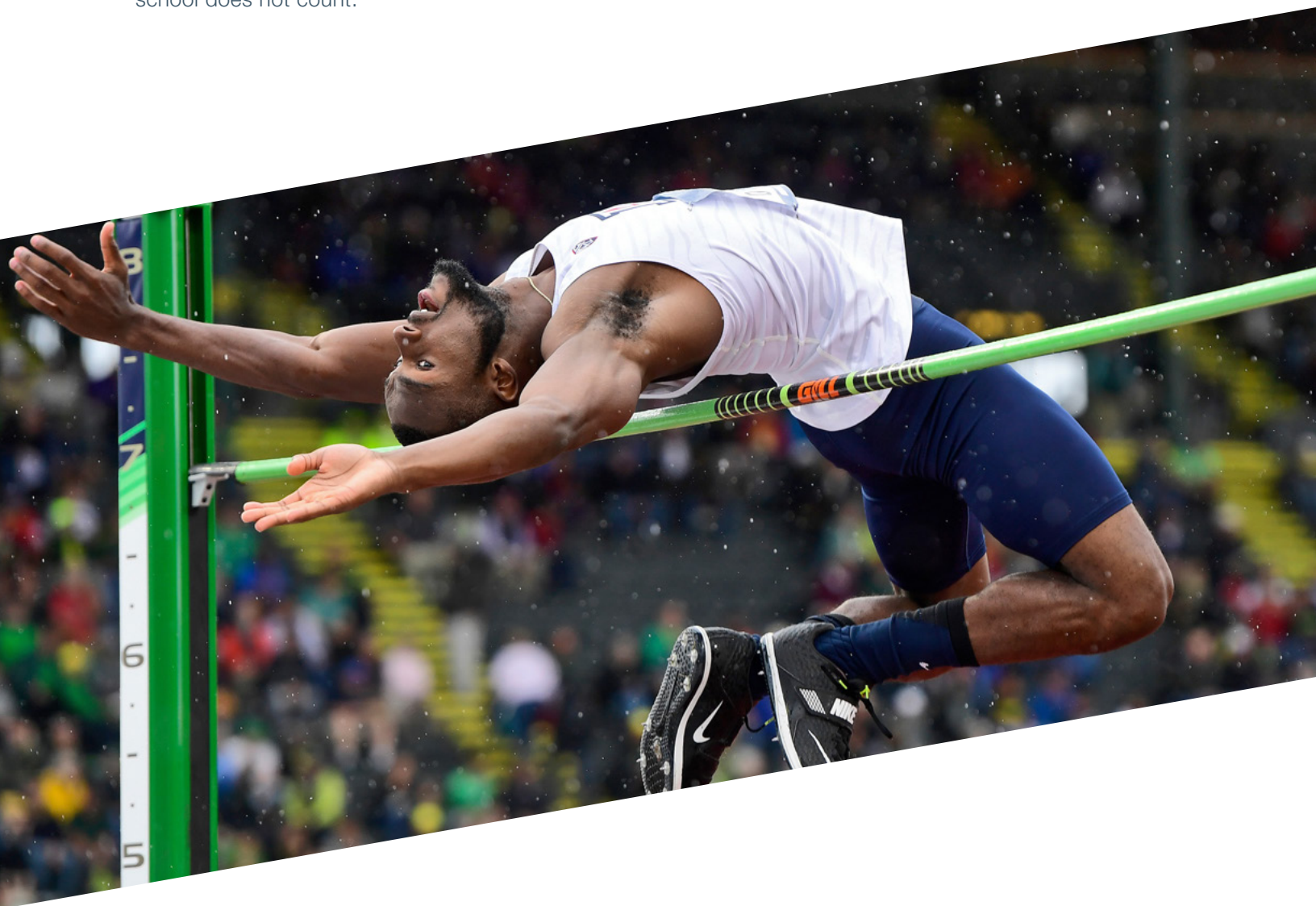
If you have not participated in your sport for two years, you may use an exception to compete immediately if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You have not practiced for more than 14 consecutive days or competed with an NCAA team for two years before practicing or competing with your new school.
- You did not practice or compete in noncollegiate amateur competition for two years while you were a full-time student.

## TRANSFER EXCEPTIONS FOR DIVISION III SCHOOLS

If you transfer from a four-year school to an NCAA Division III school, you may use an exception to compete immediately if you have not practiced or competed in intercollegiate sports. If you participated in intercollegiate sports at your current school, you may use an exception only if you would have been both academically and athletically eligible had you stayed at your current school.

If your current school did not sponsor your sport while you were a student, you may use an exception to compete immediately if you completed 24-semester or 36-quarter transferable-degree credit hours and attended your current school for at least two full-time semesters or three full-time quarters. Summer school does not count.







## CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

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While initial-eligibility rules affect your first year at a Division I or Division II school, continuing-eligibility rules determine how long you may compete. If you are transferring to an NCAA school, the length of time you may compete for that school will be based in part on continuing-eligibility rules.

If you compete at a Division I school, you have five calendar years to play four seasons of competition. Your five-year clock starts when you enroll as a full-time student at any two-year or four-year school and does not stop until five years have passed. Your clock continues to tick down, even if you spend an academic year of residence as a result of transferring, if you red shirt, if you do not attend school or even if you enroll part time during your college career.

If you compete at a Division II or Division III school, you have 10 full-time semesters or 15 full-time quarters to play four seasons of competition. You use a semester or quarter when you attend classes at a two-year or four-year school as a full-time student or when you enroll part time and compete for your school. You do not use a term if you are not enrolled or if you attend part time without competing.

You are allowed to compete for up to four seasons in each sport for two-year or four-year schools. You do not gain back any seasons of competition by transferring to a new school. If you are transferring to a Division I or Division II school, you will be charged a season of competition for each academic year in which you competed. If you are transferring from a Division III school to another Division III school, you will be charged a season of competition for each academic year in which you competed or practiced on or after the date of first competition at your previous Division III school(s). The amount of competition or practice does not matter – you are charged a season of eligibility for even a minute of competition or, in Division III, a minute of practice on or after the date of the first competition.



# IMPORTANT NCAA DEFINITIONS

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**Academic year of residence (commonly referred to as “sitting out”):** You may need to spend an academic year of residence without competing at your new school unless you qualify for a transfer exception. For an academic year of residence to count, you must complete a full-time program of studies for two semesters or three quarters. Summer school and part-time enrollment do not count for an academic year of residence.

**Certifying school:** The new school you want to attend determines whether you are eligible to play.

**Continuing-eligibility rules — Continuing-eligibility rules affect how long you may compete in a certain sport:**

- **Division I:** If you play at a Division I school, you have five calendar years to play four seasons of competition. Your five-year clock starts when you enroll as a full-time student at any college. Your clock continues to tick down, even if you spend an academic year of residence as a result of transferring, if you red shirt, if you do not attend school or even if you enroll part time during your college career.
- **Divisions II and III:** If you play at a Division II or III school, you have the first 10 semesters or 15 quarters in which you attend as a full-time student to complete your four seasons of participation. You use a semester or quarter any time you attend class as a full-time student or enroll part time and compete for the institution. You do not use a term if you only attend part time with no competition or are not enrolled for a term.

**Exception:** A transfer exception allows you to practice, compete or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at your new school. Your new school will decide if you qualify for a transfer exception.

**Financial aid (scholarship):** Any money for school you receive from a college or another source. Financial aid may be based on athletics, financial need or academic achievement.

**Full time:** Each school determines what full-time status means. Typically, you are a full-time student if you are enrolled for at least 12 credit hours in a term. Some schools define a full-time student as someone who takes fewer than 12 credit hours in a term.

**Initial-eligibility rules:** Initial-eligibility rules determine whether you may practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at a Division I or Division II school.

**International students:** An international student is any student who attends a two-year or four-year school outside the United States.

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA):** The national governing body for more than 1,300 colleges, universities, conferences and organizations.

**NCAA Eligibility Center:** The NCAA Eligibility Center evaluates your high school academic record and amateurism history to determine if you are eligible to participate during your first year at a Division I or II college.

**National Letter of Intent (NLI):** NCAA schools that are part of the NLI program may send a National Letter of Intent to a prospective student-athlete they have recruited to participate in their intercollegiate sports program.

The letter is a legally binding contract. It explains what athletics financial aid the school agrees to provide the student-athlete for one full academic year, only if the student is admitted to the school and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules. If you sign a National Letter of Intent, you agree to attend that school for one academic year and other schools that are part of the National Letter of Intent program can no longer recruit you. For more information, visit [nationalletter.org](http://nationalletter.org).

**Nonqualifier:** A student who has not graduated from high school or who, at the time specified in the NCAA rules, has not successfully completed the required number of core-curriculum courses or has not presented the required GPA and/or SAT or ACT score required to be a qualifier. If you are a nonqualifier, you cannot practice, compete or receive an athletics scholarship from a Division I or II school during your first academic year. You will have only three seasons of competition in Division I; however, a fourth season may be granted if you complete 80 percent of your designated degree program before the start of your fifth year of enrollment.

**Notification of Transfer (Effective Oct. 15, 2018):** An NCAA Division I student-athlete shall request a “notification of transfer” through their current compliance office. A student-athlete may initiate the notification-of-transfer process by providing his or her institution with a written notification-of-transfer at any time. The student-athlete’s institution shall enter his or her information into the national transfer database within *two* business days of receipt of the student-athlete’s request.

**One-time transfer exception:** If you never have transferred from a four-year school, you may use a one-time exception to compete immediately at a Division I or II school.

To qualify for this exception, you must meet all the following conditions:

- You are in good academic standing and are making progress toward your degree at your current school.
- You would have been considered academically eligible to compete had you stayed at your current school.
- You have a written release agreement from your current school stating it does not object to you receiving a transfer exception.

If this is your first time transferring from a four-year school and you are planning to land at a Division I school for baseball, basketball or men’s ice hockey, you may not use the one-time transfer exception unless you were considered both nonrecruited by your original four-year school and you have never received an athletics scholarship. If you are a Division I football student-athlete, you may use the one-time transfer exception only if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You are transferring from a Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) school to a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) school and you have two seasons of competition eligibility remaining.
- You are transferring from an FCS school that offers athletics scholarships to an FCS school that does not offer athletics scholarships.
- This is your first time transferring, were considered nonrecruited by your original four-year school, and never received an athletics scholarship.

**Partial qualifier:** A student who has met some, but not all, of the academic requirements necessary to be a qualifier. If you are a partial qualifier, you can practice on campus and receive financial aid from a Division II school, but you cannot compete for one academic year. Division I does not have partial qualifiers.

**Permission-to-contact letter (written permission to contact):** If you attend a four-year school full time, athletics staff members from an NCAA school cannot contact you or your parents unless they first have a letter from your current athletics director (or athletics administrator designated by the athletics director). If your current school does not grant you written permission to contact, the new school cannot encourage you to transfer and — in Divisions I and II — cannot give you an athletics scholarship until you have attended the new school for one academic year. If you are transferring from a school that is not a member of the NCAA or NAIA, you do not need a permission-to-contact letter. Effective Oct. 15, 2018, a currently enrolled Division I student-athlete will request notification of transfer in place of permission to contact.

**Qualifier:** A student who, for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid, practice and competition, has:

- Graduated from high school.
- Successfully completed the required core curriculum consisting of a minimum number of courses in specified subjects.
- Obtained a specified minimum GPA in the core curriculum.
- Obtained a specified minimum SAT or ACT score.

**Recruited:** If a college coach contacts you off campus, pays your expenses to visit the campus, or in Divisions I and II, issues you a National Letter of Intent or a written offer of financial aid, you are considered to be recruited.

Please note for student-athletes transferring to Division I schools, the telephone call legislation within this definition was removed as of Aug. 1, 2017, so check with your compliance office if you are transferring to a Division I school to learn if telephone calls have impacted your recruited status.

**Redshirt:** In Divisions I or II, redshirt refers to someone who attends a school full time, but does not play for an entire academic year for the sole purpose of saving a season of competition. A redshirt does not play in any college games or scrimmages in a given sport for an entire academic year, even though that student is otherwise eligible. If you do not play in a sport the entire academic year, you have not used a season of competition. However, if you play in even one second of a game as a college student-athlete, you are not a redshirt. Redshirting does not exist in Division III because if you play or practice after your first opportunity to compete, you are charged with a season of participation.

**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 you play any time during a season, regardless of how long you played, it counts as having played for an entire season in that sport. Your season of competition starts when you spend one second in competition on the field, court, gym or track.

**Self-release:** If you are a student at a Division III school and you want to transfer to another Division III school, you may issue your own permission-to-contact self-release to allow another Division III school to contact you about transferring.

**Transfer trigger:** A condition that can affect your transfer status. A student who triggers transfer status is a student who:

- Has been a full-time student at a two-year or four-year college during a regular academic term. Classes taken during summer terms do not count.
- Practiced with a college team.
- Practiced or competed while enrolled as a part-time student.
- Received financial aid from a college while attending summer school.

**Transferable credit hours:** Credit hours earned at your previous school that your new school will accept toward your degree. Each school determines how many and which credit hours are acceptable for transferring.

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

**Waiver:** An action that sets aside an NCAA rule because a specific, extraordinary circumstance prevents you from meeting the rule. An NCAA school may file a waiver on your behalf; you cannot file a waiver for yourself. The school does not administer the waiver; the conference office or NCAA does.

# WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

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## NCAA RESOURCES

[ncaa.org/transfer](http://ncaa.org/transfer)  
[ncaa.org/playcollegesports](http://ncaa.org/playcollegesports)  
[eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org)

Follow us on Twitter [@NCAAEC](https://twitter.com/NCAAEC)  
Follow us on Instagram [@playcollegesports](https://www.instagram.com/playcollegesports)

**U.S. callers:** 317-917-6008  
**International callers:** 317-917-6222  
Monday-Friday  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time

### Certification Processing

NCAA Eligibility Center  
Certification Processing  
P.O. Box 7136  
Indianapolis, IN 46207

### Overnight Delivery

NCAA Eligibility Center  
Certification Processing  
1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

## NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT RESOURCES

[nationalletter.org](http://nationalletter.org)  
317-223-0706

## NCAA CONFERENCES

[NCAA schools and conferences](#)

## OTHER VALUABLE RESOURCES

### National Junior College Athletic Association

[njcaa.org](http://njcaa.org)  
719-590-9788  
1631 Mesa Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

### California Community College Athletics Association

[ccaasports.org](http://ccaasports.org)  
916-444-1600  
2017 O Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811

### Northwest Athletic Conference of Community Colleges

[nwacsports.org](http://nwacsports.org)  
360-992-2833  
1933 Fort Vancouver Way  
Vancouver, WA 98663





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