

Helping Student-athletes Through NCAA Initial-eligibility Process

Editor's Note: *This article on the basic requirements of the NCAA initial-eligibility process was written by the National Association for Athletics Compliance (NAAC) Education Subcommittee and outlines some of the basic requirements of the NCAA Initial-Eligibility process and offers information on how high school coaches, guidance counselors and administrators can help guide their student-athletes through this sometimes confusing process.*

NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Prospective student-athletes should register with the Eligibility Center at the beginning of their junior year in high school. Registration occurs online at the Eligibility Center Web site: www.eligibilitycenter.org.

Q: Is there a cost for registering with the NCAA Eligibility Center?

A: Yes. Registration is \$60.

The registration fee may be waived for prospective student-athletes who have received a fee waiver for the ACT or SAT. High school counselors can submit waiver confirmations through the High School Administrators portal of the Eligibility Center Web site.

Q: What information must be submitted to the Eligibility Center?

A: Official High School Transcript.

A sixth-semester official transcript should be sent to the Eligibility Center upon completion of the junior year. A final official transcript with proof of graduation should be sent after graduation. If a prospective student-athlete has attended more than one high school, an official transcript should be sent to the Eligibility Center from each high school attended.

All transcripts should be mailed or overnight delivered to the Eligibility Center at:

NCAA Eligibility Center
PO Box 7136
Indianapolis, IN 46207
(standard mail)

-OR-

NCAA Eligibility Center
1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(overnight delivery)

Test Scores (ACT or SAT)

Test scores must be sent directly from the testing agency. The Eligibility Center should be selected as one of the college choices by using Code "9999". Students can also have their test scores sent to the Eligibility Center by visiting www.collegeboard.com or www.actstudent.org.

Q: What requirements must a prospective student-athlete meet to be certified by the Eligibility Center as eligible for practice, competition and athletics aid?

A: A prospective student-athlete must:

- Graduate from high school;
- Complete a minimum of 16 core courses;
- Present the required grade-point average on the GPA/test score sliding scale;
- Present a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT**;
- Complete the amateurism questionnaire.

**The sum ACT score is calculated by adding together the score for each subsection (English, Math, Reading, Science) of the exam. The Eligibility Center does not use the ACT composite score. The combined SAT score is determined by adding the Critical Reading and Math sections of the exam.

Q: What is a Core Course?

A: A core course is a class that meets all of the following criteria:

- Any Mathematics course at or above Algebra I;
- It is completed no later than the core-course time limitation (in eight semesters and with the prospective student-athlete's incoming ninth-grade class); and
- It is taken no earlier than the eighth grade.

Q: What core courses are required for eligibility?

A: 16 core courses must be completed as follows:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Mathematics (Algebra 1 or higher)

- 2 years of Natural/Physical Science (including 1 year of a lab if offered by high school)
- 1 additional year of English, Mathematics, or Natural/Physical Science
- 2 years of Social Science
- 4 years of "additional" core courses (foreign language, non-doctrinal religion/philosophy, or any of the above areas).

Q: Where can I find the list of approved core courses for our high school?

A: Approved course lists can be accessed at www.eligibilitycenter.org, by entering the appropriate portal (i.e., Students and Parents, High Schools) and selecting the Resources tab.

Q: How can the list of approved core courses be updated?

A: High school administrators should use the core course submission section of the Eligibility Center Web site (located within the High School portal) to submit the titles of courses that meet core-course requirements.

Q: Will courses taken after a student's senior year meet core-course requirements?

A: A prospective student-athlete may use one core course completed during the year after graduation. The course may be completed in summer or during the academic year and may be taken at a location other than the high school from which the prospective student-athlete graduated. This coursework must be completed prior to the prospective student-athlete's initial full-time enrollment at a collegiate institution.

Q: How is the NCAA Core GPA different from a student's overall GPA?

A: The NCAA core-course GPA is calculated using only NCAA approved core courses that satisfy the core-course requirements listed above.

Q: How is the core-course GPA calculated?

A: The core-course GPA is the average of the best grades achieved for all required core courses. To determine the quality points earned for each core course, multiply the points for the grade by the amount of credit earned. Use the following scale unless your high school has a different scale as indicated on the approved core course list:

A = 4 points B = 3 points C = 2 points D = 1 point

Examples of total quality point calculation are:

- An A grade (4 points) for a semester course (0.50 units) = 4 points x 0.5 units = 2 quality points
- An A grade (4 points) for a full-year course (1.00 units) = 4 points x 1.0 units = 4 quality points

Once the total quality points are tallied, divide those points by the total number of core-course units the prospective student-athlete has completed. This calculation helps keep track of the prospective student-athlete's core grade-point average.

Resources to help with these calculations are found by logging onto www.eligibilitycenter.org and selecting the "Resources" tab, then "U.S. Students".

Q: What role do high school guidance counselors and athletic administrators play in the initial-eligibility process?

A: Guidance counselors and athletic administrators should:

- Make sure the list of approved courses is current and accurate;
- Encourage college-bound prospective student-athletes to complete the registration process as early as possible, but not later than the beginning of their junior year;
- Send official transcripts for all prospective student-athletes at the end of their sixth semester and eighth semester, including proof of graduation; and
- Submit registration fee waivers.

Q: How can high school guidance counselors and athletic administrators help a student navigate through the initial-eligibility process?

A: Guidance counselors and athletic administrators should:

- Know the initial-eligibility requirements;
- Map out an academic track for prospective student-athletes as early as possible, and no later than the start of the senior year, to allow for proper scheduling of core courses prior to graduation;
- Know how to calculate a core-course GPA;
- Understand the special considerations that are given to prospective student-athletes with documented education-impacting disabilities and how to guide individuals with a disability through the NCAA documentation process;
- Create an efficient system to submit information to the Eligibility Center;
- Help students identify colleges that fit their criteria (e.g., academics, size, distance from home, location, etc.);
- Emphasize the importance of academic performance at all grade levels – grade nine counts towards core GPA just as much as grade 12; and
- Ensure that college-bound prospective student-athletes are taking core courses from ninth through 12th grades.



The National Association for Athletics Compliance is one of 11 affiliate associations of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics and is the only professional organization dedicated to serving NCAA compliance programs at our nation's NCAA Division I, II and III institutions.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



Core Courses

- **NCAA Division I requires 16 core courses. Division II will require 16 core courses for students enrolling on or after August 1, 2013.**
- **NCAA Division I will require 10 core courses** to be completed **prior to the seventh semester** (seven of the 10 must be a combination of English, math or natural or physical science that meet the distribution requirements below). These 10 courses become “locked in” at the seventh semester and cannot be retaken for grade improvement.
- *Beginning August 1, 2016, it will be possible for a Division I college-bound student-athlete to still receive athletics aid and the ability to practice with the team if he or she fails to meet the 10 course requirement, but would not be able to compete.*

Test Scores

- **Division I** uses a sliding scale to match test scores and core grade-point averages (GPA). The sliding scale for those requirements is shown on Page No. 2 of this sheet.
- **Division II** requires a minimum SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.
- The SAT score used for NCAA purposes includes **only** the critical reading and math sections. The writing section of the SAT is not used.
- The ACT score used for NCAA purposes is a **sum** of the following four sections: English, mathematics, reading and science.
- **When you register for the SAT or ACT, use the NCAA Eligibility Center code of 9999 to ensure all SAT and ACT scores are reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Test scores that appear on transcripts will not be used.**

Grade-Point Average

- **Be sure** to look at your high school’s List of NCAA Courses on the NCAA Eligibility Center’s website (www.eligibilitycenter.org). Only courses that appear on your school’s List of NCAA Courses will be used in the calculation of the core GPA. Use the list as a guide.
- **Division I** students enrolling full time **before August 1, 2016**, should use Sliding Scale A to determine eligibility to receive athletics aid, practice and competition during the first year.
- **Division I** GPA required to receive athletics aid and practice **on or after August 1, 2016**, is 2.000 (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on Sliding Scale B on Page No. 2 of this sheet).
- **Division I** GPA required to be eligible for competition **on or after August 1, 2016**, is 2.300 (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on Sliding Scale B on Page No. 2 of this sheet).
- **The Division II** core GPA requirement is a minimum of 2.000.
- *Remember, the NCAA GPA is calculated using NCAA core courses only.*

DIVISION I 16 Core Courses

- 4 years of English.
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).
- 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).
- 1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
- 2 years of social science.
- 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy).

DIVISION II 16 Core Courses (2013 and After)

- 3 years of English.
- 2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).
- 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).
- 3 years of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
- 2 years of social science.
- 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy).

Sliding Scale A		
<i>Use for Division I prior to August 1, 2016</i>		
NCAA DIVISION I SLIDING SCALE		
3.550 & above	400	37
3.525	410	38
3.500	420	39
3.475	430	40
3.450	440	41
3.425	450	41
3.400	460	42
3.375	470	42
3.350	480	43
3.325	490	44
3.300	500	44
3.275	510	45
3.250	520	46
3.225	530	46
3.200	540	47
3.175	550	47
3.150	560	48
3.125	570	49
3.100	580	49
3.075	590	50
3.050	600	50
3.025	610	51
3.000	620	52
2.975	630	52
2.950	640	53
2.925	650	53
2.900	660	54
2.875	670	55
2.850	680	56
2.825	690	56
2.800	700	57
2.775	710	58
2.750	720	59
2.725	730	59
2.700	730	60
2.675	740-750	61
2.650	760	62
2.625	770	63
2.600	780	64
2.575	790	65
2.550	800	66
2.525	810	67
2.500	820	68
2.475	830	69
2.450	840-850	70
2.425	860	70
2.400	860	71
2.375	870	72
2.350	880	73
2.325	890	74
2.300	900	75
2.275	910	76
2.250	920	77
2.225	930	78
2.200	940	79
2.175	950	80
2.150	960	80
2.125	960	81
2.100	970	82
2.075	980	83
2.050	990	84
2.025	1000	85
2.000	1010	86

Sliding Scale B			
<i>Use for Division I beginning August 1, 2016</i>			
NCAA DIVISION I SLIDING SCALE			
3.550	4.000	400	37
3.525	3.975	410	38
3.500	3.950	420	39
3.475	3.925	430	40
3.450	3.900	440	41
3.425	3.875	450	41
3.400	3.850	460	42
3.375	3.825	470	42
3.350	3.800	480	43
3.325	3.775	490	44
3.300	3.750	500	44
3.275	3.725	510	45
3.250	3.700	520	46
3.225	3.675	530	46
3.200	3.650	540	47
3.175	3.625	550	47
3.150	3.600	560	48
3.125	3.575	570	49
3.100	3.550	580	49
3.075	3.525	590	50
3.050	3.500	600	50
3.025	3.475	610	51
3.000	3.450	620	52
2.975	3.425	630	52
2.950	3.400	640	53
2.925	3.375	650	53
2.900	3.350	660	54
2.875	3.325	670	55
2.850	3.300	680	56
2.825	3.275	690	56
2.800	3.250	700	57
2.775	3.225	710	58
2.750	3.200	720	59
2.725	3.175	730	60
2.700	3.150	740	61
2.675	3.125	750	61
2.650	3.100	760	62
2.625	3.075	770	63
2.600	3.050	780	64
2.575	3.025	790	65
2.550	3.000	800	66
2.525	2.975	810	67
2.500	2.950	820	68
2.475	2.925	830	69
2.450	2.900	840	70
2.425	2.875	850	70
2.400	2.850	860	71
2.375	2.825	870	72
2.350	2.800	880	73
2.325	2.775	890	74
2.300	2.750	900	75
2.275	2.725	910	76
2.250	2.700	920	77
2.225	2.675	930	78
2.200	2.650	940	79
2.175	2.625	950	80
2.150	2.600	960	81
2.125	2.575	970	82
2.100	2.550	980	83
2.075	2.525	990	84
2.050	2.500	1000	85
2.025	2.475	1010	86
2.000	2.450	1020	86
	2.425	1030	87
	2.400	1040	88
	2.375	1050	89
	2.350	1060	90
	2.325	1070	91
	2.300	1080	93

For more information, visit the NCAA Eligibility Center website at www.eligibilitycenter.org.