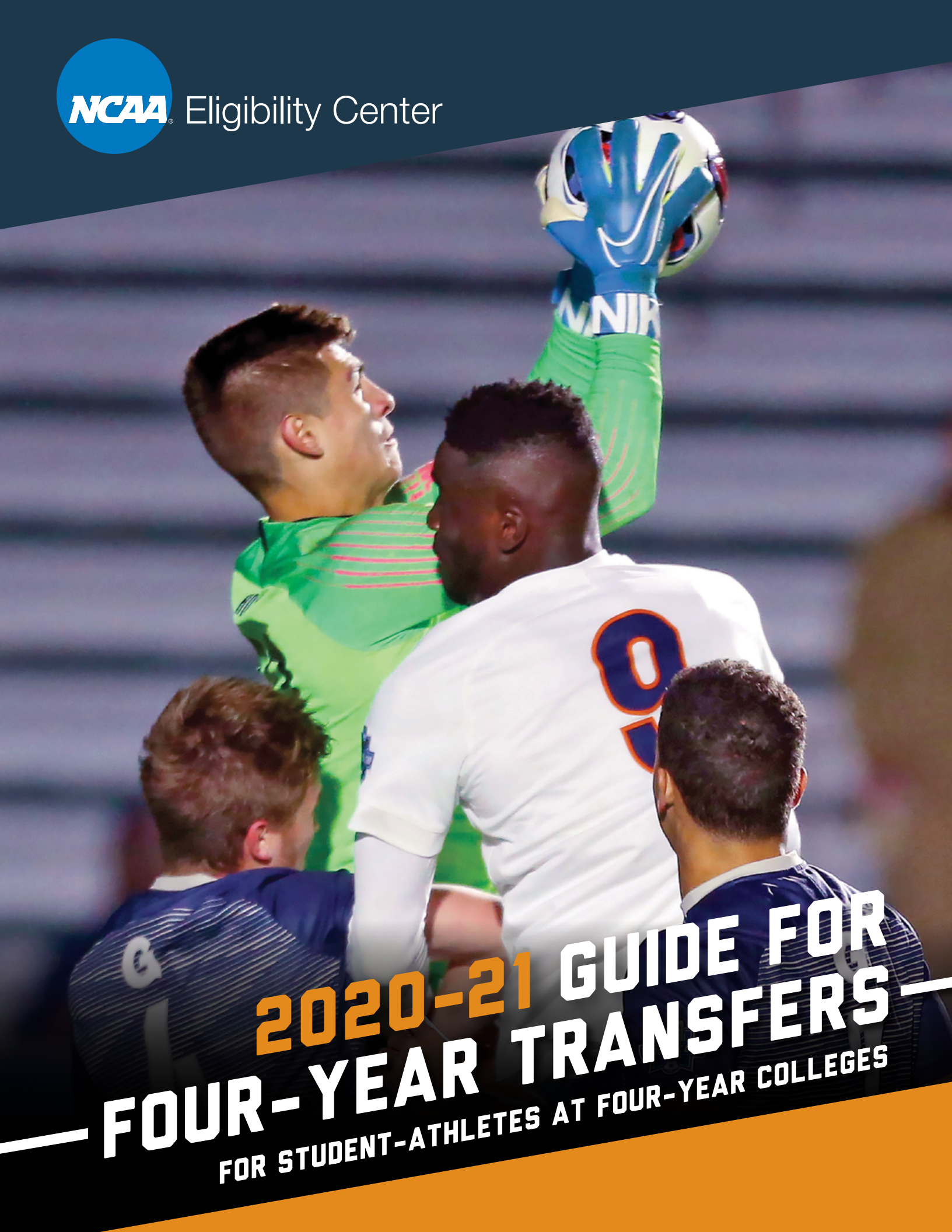




Eligibility Center



2020-21 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 gives 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.

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.

This guide is for student-athletes transferring from a four-year school to another four-year school. Students currently attending a two-year school (junior or community college) should refer to the current version of the [Guide For Two-Year Transfers](#), available at ncaapublications.com.

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 88% in Division I, 73% in Division II and 87% in Division III.

PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE ATHLETES WHO BECOME PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES

	MEN'S BASKETBALL	WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL	BASEBALL	MEN'S ICE HOCKEY
High School Student-Athletes	540,769	399,067	1,006,013	482,740	35,283
NCAA Student-Athletes	18,816	16,509	73,712	36,011	4,323
NCAA Student-Athletes Drafted	52	36	254	791	71
*Percent High School to NCAA	3.5%	4.1%	7.3%	7.5%	12.3%
*Percent NCAA to Professional	1.2%	0.8%	1.6%	9.9%	7.4%

*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 athletics eligibility and ensure that you will graduate on time. 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. 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 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 10](#).
- 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

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 the school you are transferring from.

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.
- See [page 9](#) for more information.

ELIGIBILITY CLOCK

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 18](#) for more information.

TRANSFER ELIGIBILITY

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

- You may be able to compete immediately if you meet a transfer exception.
- See [page 13](#) for more information.

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER (DIVISION I AND DIVISION II) AND PERMISSION TO CONTACT (DIVISION III)

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

- Other NCAA schools may not recruit you directly or indirectly until you have initiated the proper transfer protocol on campus with your compliance staff.
- See [page 10](#) for more information.

OTHER TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

Do you meet other transfer requirements?

- If you have the permission to contact and/or notification of transfer in place and your information is entered into the transfer portal, your new NCAA school will need to certify you meet all applicable NCAA, school and conference transfer requirements for that specific institution. Consider asking the compliance office to determine if you are eligible prior to arriving 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 11](#) 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 and/or Division I notification-of-transfer entry into the NCAA transfer portal.**

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.

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. 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

Jordan 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, Jordan 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, Jordan decided that he wanted to go to a different NCAA school.

Is Jordan a transfer student-athlete?

Yes. The transfer rules applied to Jordan the minute he became a full-time student and went to class on the first day of the semester. Jordan 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 22](#) for a link to conferences' websites or visit ncaa.org.

Learn more about your new school's admission policies

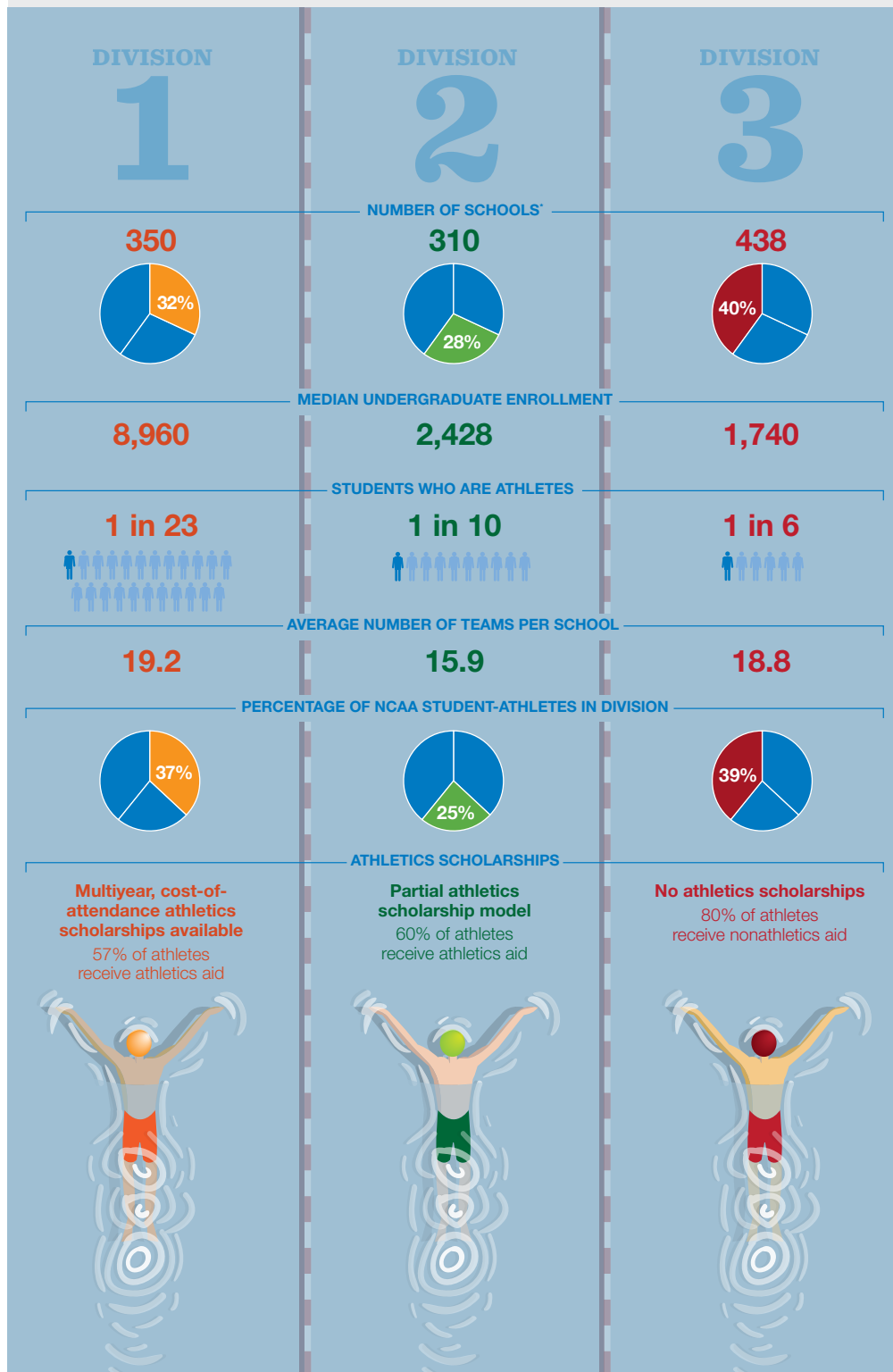
Meeting the NCAA transfer rules does not guarantee you will be admitted to a new school. You also need to meet the school's admission requirements — including academic standards — before you can play NCAA sports.

- Visit ncaa.org for a full list of NCAA schools, sorted by division, sport and conference. You also will find a database to help you find the contact information for athletics 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 the school you're transferring from or initiate the notification-of-transfer process and your information is entered into the national transfer portal, 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 10](#).



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.

How is each division governed?

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

Did you know?



DI student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student body.

DII is the only division with schools in Alaska, Puerto Rico and Canada.



DIII's largest school has 25,725 undergraduates. The smallest? 285.

Learn more at ncaa.org/about.

*Numbers are from 2019-20. All other figures are from 2018-19.

NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Updated January 2020.

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.



Learn more about initial-eligibility statuses for Division I and Division II on our website ncaa.org/student-athletes/future

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 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?

- Another NCAA school cannot recruit you, directly or indirectly, until you first follow the division-specific steps on the next page regarding notification of transfer (DI and DII) or written permission to contact (DIII).
- You should only consider requesting notification of transfer (DI and DII) or written permission to contact (DIII) 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 notification of transfer is validated and your information is entered in the national transfer portal.
- You can speak with other departments outside of athletics at a new school at any time. Examples include admissions, registrar and financial aid office.
- Once notification of transfer (DI and DII) or written permission to contact (DIII) has been completed and your information is entered in the national transfer portal, all applicable NCAA recruiting rules will continue to apply (e.g., tryout rules, official visit rules, recruiting calendars, etc.)

CASE STUDY

Corey 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, Corey decided she wanted to transfer to a Division II school and join the swimming and diving team.

Does Corey need to ask the Division I school for a notification of transfer through its compliance office?

Yes. Because Corey 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 an NCAA Division I school

An NCAA Division I student-athlete must request a “notification of transfer” through the compliance office at the school they are transferring from. A student-athlete may initiate the notification-of-transfer process by providing his or her institution with a written notice at any time. The student-athlete’s institution must enter his or her information into the NCAA transfer portal within two business days of receipt of the student-athlete’s request. The NCAA Division I institution you are transferring from will 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 athletics aid agreement that will change upon receipt of your request for notification of transfer. These policies should be published and available to student-athletes (e.g., student-athlete handbook or school website). Please note that being placed in this notification-to-transfer portal does not indicate you are eligible at the new NCAA school you transfer to. The compliance office at your new school will still need to certify both transfer and remaining eligibility.

Transferring from an NCAA Division II school

Division II Bylaw 13.1.1.2 says a student-athlete must request notification of transfer with their compliance office before having any direct or indirect recruiting with a new NCAA school. Upon request, your compliance office has seven business days to enter your contact information into the NCAA transfer portal. Please note that implications may arise, including but not limited to, access to athletics facilities, roster spot and playing time. Since Division II financial aid awards include a one-year period of award, your Division II school may decide not to renew your athletics aid agreement at the end of the academic year. Please note that being placed in this notification-to-transfer portal does not indicate you are eligible at the new NCAA school you transfer to. The compliance office at your new school will still need to certify both transfer and remaining eligibility.

Transferring from an NCAA Division III school

Division III Bylaw 13.1.1.2 says a student-athlete must have written permission to contact a new school. Some Division III schools are using the transfer portal. Speak to your athletics compliance staff to see what your school prefers. If a school does not grant that permission within seven days of being asked, you can appeal that denial. Contact your compliance office for more information. 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 will not encourage the transfer and, specifically, a new NCAA Division I or Division II school will 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 you are 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.

CASE STUDY

James attended a Division III school as a freshman and sophomore. James practiced and competed on its men’s lacrosse team.

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

Does James need to ask his first school for a written permission-to-contact letter?

No. Because James 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.

Transferring from an 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?

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.

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 to this academic year in residence requirement?

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 impact your immediate eligibility.

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

Once it is permissible for you to speak with another institution ([see page 10](#)), 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 [page 9](#).

CASE STUDY

Donovan 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 Donovan complete his academic year of residence?

Yes. Since Donovan 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 19](#).
- You may not use an exception if you are currently completing an academic year of residence at the school you are transferring from.
- 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 after 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 received an athletics scholarship from the school you are transferring from during the same academic year.

CASE STUDY

Grayson 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.

Grayson 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 Grayson complete her academic year of residence?

No. Grayson 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

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 are nonrecruited or nonscholarship.**
5. **You have not participated in your sport for two years.**
6. **Graduate or postbaccalaureate participation.**

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 the school you are transferring from.
- You would have been considered academically eligible to compete had you stayed at your current school.
- You have a written release agreement from the school you are transferring from 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 enroll at a Division I school for baseball, basketball or

CASE STUDY

Eric 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, Eric transferred to a Division II school.

Is Eric eligible to play right away?

No. Eric 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, Eric must spend one academic year of residence at his transfer school.

men's ice hockey, you may not use the one-time transfer exception. 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.

If you are transferring to a Division II school as an undergraduate student and only have one season of competition remaining or you are in your final two semesters of your 10-semester clock, you also must have completed an average of 12 semester hours (12 quarter hours) or transferable degree credit for each full-time term of attendance at any institution with a cumulative 2.0 GPA.

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 ARE NONRECRUITED OR NONSCHOLARSHIP.

If you are transferring to an NCAA Division I school, you may use this exception if either of the following conditions is met:

- Your previous institution does not provide athletically related aid in your sport and it did not recruit you.
- Your previous institution did provide athletically related aid in your sport but no athletically related aid was provided to you.

If you are transferring to an NCAA Division II school, you may use this exception if either of the following conditions is met:

- Your previous school did not pay your expenses to visit the campus.
- Your previous school did not issue you a National Letter of Intent.

The school you are transferring from can tell you more about your recruiting status.

CASE STUDY

Logan, 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. Logan's coach is unhappy with his ability, so Logan wants to transfer to another Division I school.

Can Logan use a transfer exception?

Yes, because Logan 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, Logan 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 calendar 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.

6. GRADUATE OR POSTBACCALAUREATE PARTICIPATION.

If you still have a season of eligibility and time on your division-specific clock remaining to compete, you may use an exception to compete immediately provided the appropriate criteria is met:

- If you are transferring to a Division I school, you may compete immediately if you meet all of the following: A) enroll in a graduate program, professional school, second baccalaureate or equivalent degree program, B) you have eligibility remaining, and C) you meet the conditions within the one-time transfer exception as noted previously. If you don't meet the one-time transfer exception because you are seeking an opportunity to compete in baseball, basketball, football or men's ice hockey, you may still request the one-time transfer exception provided your previous institution did not renew your athletically related financial aid for the following academic year.
- If you are transferring to a Division II school to enroll in a graduate program, professional school, second baccalaureate or equivalent degree program and you have eligibility remaining.
- If you are transferring to a Division III school to pursue a second baccalaureate or graduate degree after having graduated from another Division III school.

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 for fulfilling the two full-time semesters or three full-time quarters.





ELIGIBILITY CLOCK

While initial-eligibility rules affect your first year at a Division I or Division II school, continuing-eligibility rules determine your academic and athletic eligibility after the first year. Each division has different academic standards for maintaining academic eligibility. All of the standards are designed to move the student-athlete toward graduation in a timely manner. Certification of academic eligibility for transfer student-athletes will happen once you are enrolled at your new school and will include an evaluation of your transfer credits. The compliance staff at your new school can assist with this.

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. Your clock continues to tick down, even if you spend an academic year of residence as a result of transferring, redshirt, not attending school or enrolling 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

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, redshirt, not attending school or enrolling 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 1,200 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.

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: An NCAA Division I or II student-athlete must request a “notification of transfer” through their current compliance office before having any direct or indirect athletics recruiting with another NCAA school. Once requested, your compliance office shall enter the student’s contact information into the NCAA transfer portal within two business days (DI) and seven business days (DII). Division III schools also have the option to utilize the transfer portal; however, please check with your Division III school to see what it prefers.

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 the school you are transferring from.
- You would have been considered academically eligible to compete had you stayed at the school you are transferring from.
- 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 enroll at a Division I school for baseball, basketball or men’s ice hockey, you may not use the one-time transfer exception. 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.

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 Division III school and wish to have any direct or indirect recruiting communication and/or seek athletics aid with any future NCAA Division I or Division II school, you will first need to request a written permission to contact from the compliance office at your Division III school. If this request is denied for any reason, you may request a hearing opportunity to proceed with an appeal with your Division III school. If you are transferring from a Division III school to another Division III school, you can complete a Division III self-release form, located at ncaa.org, before submitting the release form to your new Division III school to begin recruiting activities.

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-courses in the required subject distribution.
- Obtained a specified minimum GPA in the core-courses.
- 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. In sports other than Division I football, if you play in even one second of a game as a college student-athlete, you are not a redshirt. In Division I, football student-athletes can compete in up to four contests without using a season of competition. 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 competition.

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. In sports other than Division I football, 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. In Division I, football student-athletes can compete in up to four contests without using a season of competition.

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

NCAA RESOURCES

ncaa.org/transfer
ncaa.org/playcollegesports
eligibilitycenter.org
ncaa.org/studentfaq

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

NCAA Legislative Line: 317-917-6008
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

NCAA CONFERENCES

[NCAA schools and conferences](#)

OTHER VALUABLE RESOURCES

National Junior College Athletic Association

njcaa.org
719-590-9788
1631 Mesa Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

California Community College Athletics Association

ccaasports.org
916-444-1600
2017 O St.
Sacramento, CA 95811

Northwest Athletic Conference of Community Colleges

nwacsports.org
360-992-2833
1933 Fort Vancouver Way
Vancouver, WA 98663



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