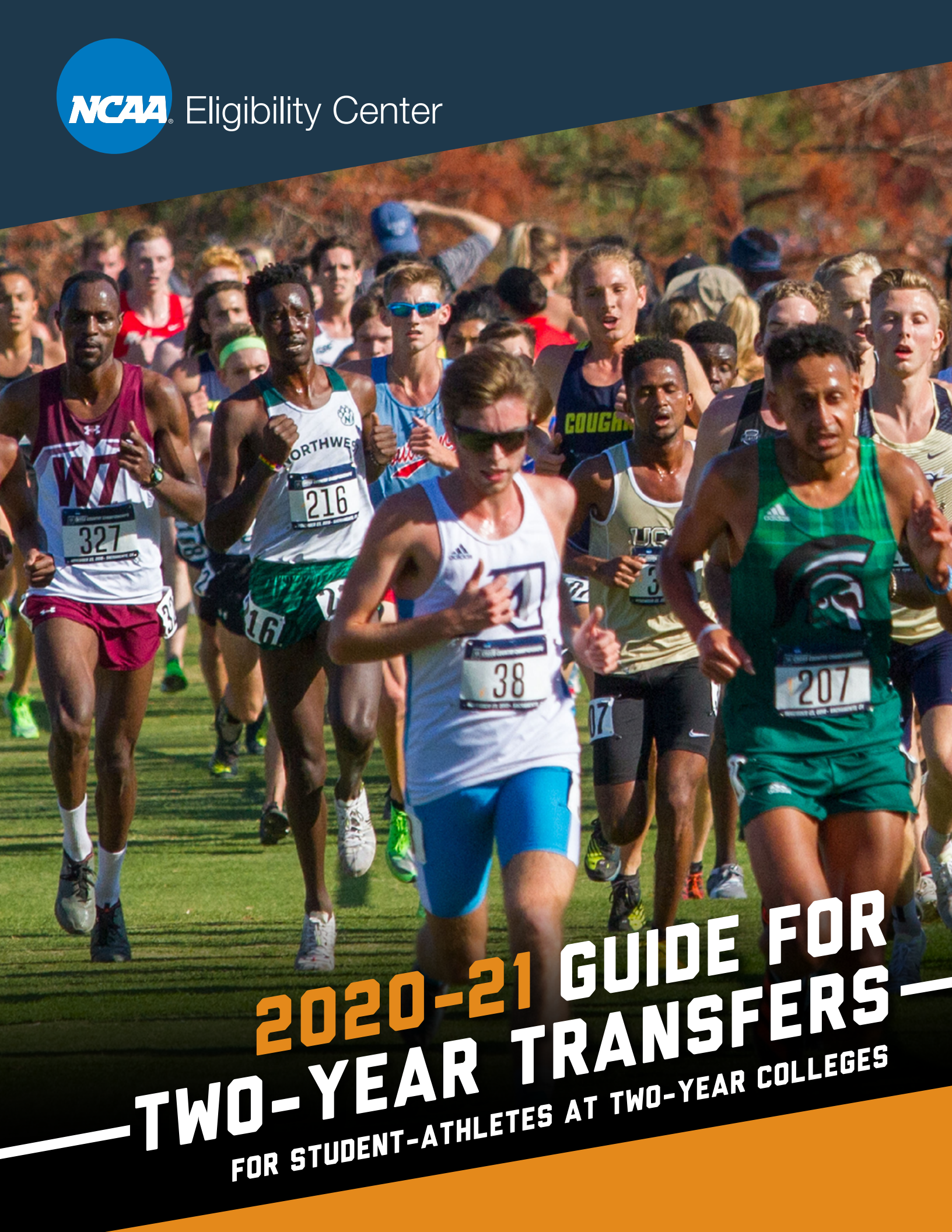




Eligibility Center



2020-21 GUIDE FOR
TWO-YEAR TRANSFERS
FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES AT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 What Should I Think About Before Transferring?

This general information is the best place to start to understand the transfer process.

4 Focus on Your Degree

The likelihood of a college athlete becoming a professional athlete is low; see the numbers.

5 Transfer Considerations Checklist

Track the things you need to do and the questions you need to ask to ensure a successful transfer experience.

6 How Do the Transfer Rules Apply to Me?

Follow a step-by-step walk-through of the NCAA transfer process.

10 When Can I Play?

Review the rules regarding when transfers may actually compete for their new schools.

11 Division I Rules.

13 Division II Rules.

17 Division III Rules.

18 Transfer Exceptions

Certain exceptions could allow you to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at your new school.

22 Eligibility Clock

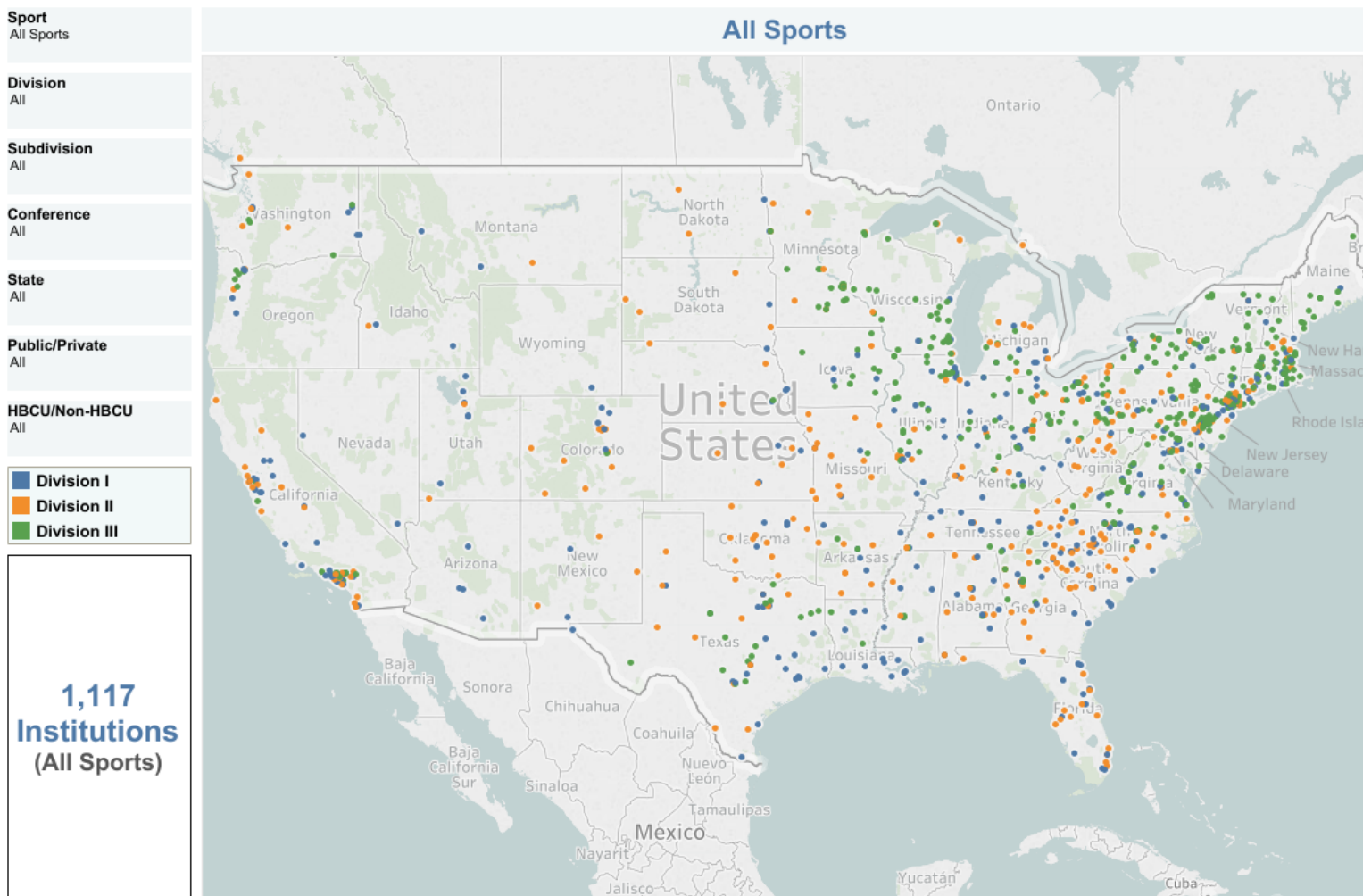
The length of time you may compete for an NCAA school will be based in part on continuing-eligibility rules.

23 Important NCAA Definitions

Learn some key definitions about the transfer process.

26 Where to Find More Information

Find a list of websites and addresses that will aid you in your transfer process.



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 two-year school (junior or community college) to a four-year institution. Students currently attending a four-year institution should refer to the current version of the [Guide for Four-Year Transfers](https://www.ncaapublications.com), available at [ncaapublications.com](https://www.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 with a four-year degree 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.
- Call the conference of the school you are considering.
- Call the NCAA at 317-917-6008, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time.

TRANSFER CHECKLIST

❑ ADMISSIONS

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

❑ 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 22](#) 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 [pages 18 to 21](#) for more information.

❑ OTHER TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

Do you meet other transfer requirements?

- Ask the athletics compliance office at your new school if you meet all of its transfer requirements.
- See [pages 11 to 17](#) for more information.



HOW DO THE TRANSFER RULES APPLY TO ME?

Note: This following information is for student-athletes transferring from a two-year school (junior or community college) to a four-year institution. Students currently attending a four-year institution should refer to the current version of the [Guide for Four-Year Transfers](http://ncaapublications.com), available at ncaapublications.com.

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.**

The rules also depend on whether you currently attend a two-year or a four-year school. For instance, if you attend a two-year school (community college or junior college) and want to transfer to an NCAA Division I or II school, you may need to graduate first from your two-year school before you can compete at your new school. If you transfer before you graduate, you may have to wait a year before you can compete.

The following information will help guide you through the process to determine if you qualify to transfer and what you need to do in order to 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?
2. Have you practiced or competed with a college team? This includes during any full-time and part-time enrollment and includes reporting to any practice that occurred prior to the start of an academic term.
3. Have you received any athletics aid from a college while attending summer school?
4. Have you received any financial aid while attending an NCAA Division I school during the summer?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, you are a transfer student-athlete because you have met conditions that trigger 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 of the above questions, you probably are not 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

Casey was recruited to play basketball at a two-year college. 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, Casey 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, Casey decided that he wanted to transfer to an NCAA school.

Is Casey a transfer student-athlete?

Yes. The transfer rules applied to Casey the minute he became a full-time student and went to class on the first day of the semester.

2. DECIDE WHERE YOU ARE GOING.

Now that you know if 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 26](#) for a link to conferences' websites or visit ncaa.org.

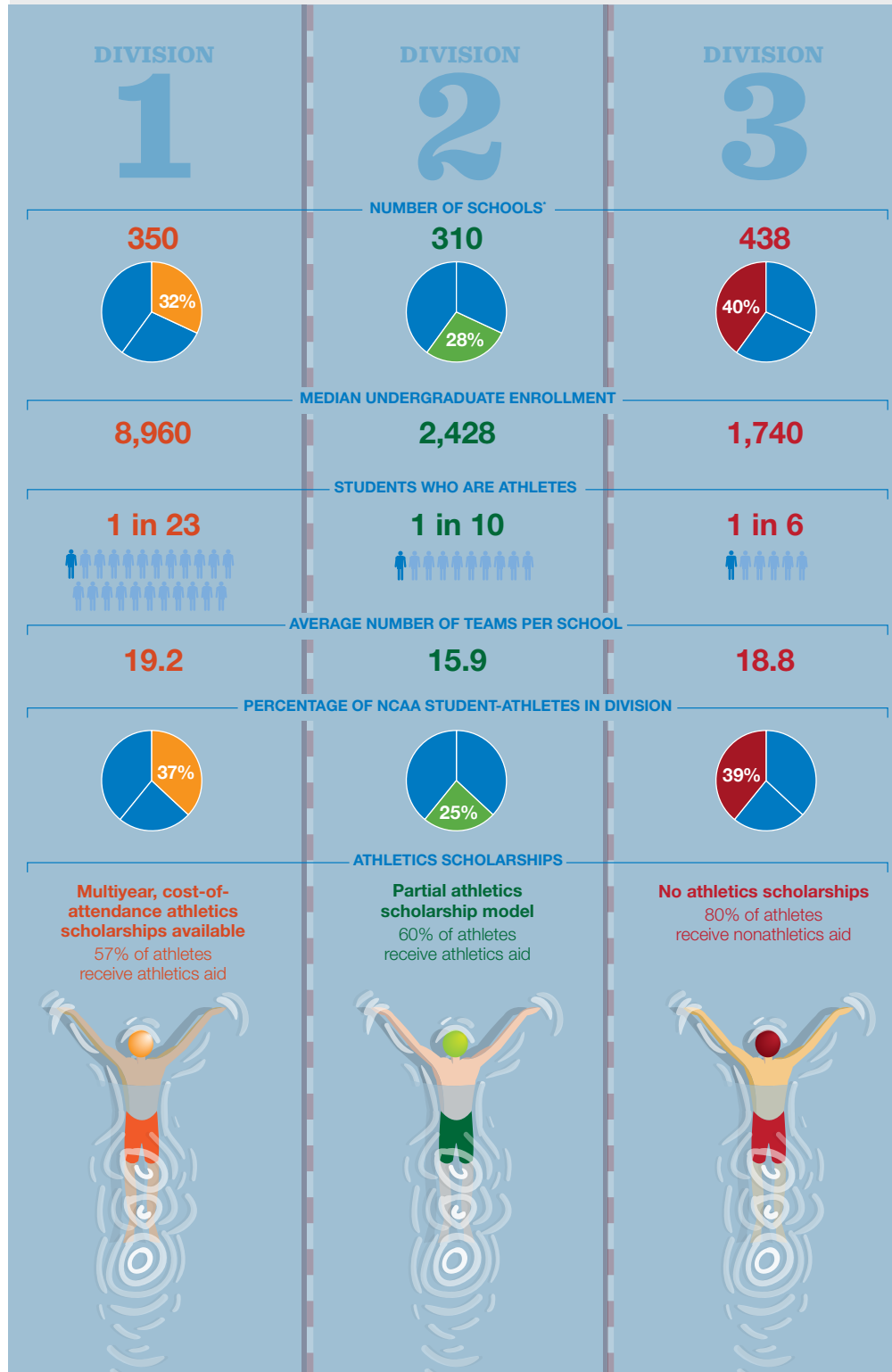
Learn more about your new school's admission policies

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 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.
- 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.

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 meet the academic standards to compete in your first year at a Division I or II school.

The NCAA Eligibility Center will determine 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 department at your new school.

There are four possible initial-eligibility statuses: Qualifier (Divisions I and II), partial qualifier (Division II only), nonqualifier (Divisions I and II) and academic redshirt (Division I only).

- If you were eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at a Division I or II school, you were a qualifier.
- If you were not eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year at a Division I or II school, you were a nonqualifier.
- If you attended a Division I school and you were eligible in your first term to practice and receive an athletics scholarship — but you were not eligible to compete — you were an academic redshirt. Only Division I schools use the academic redshirt status.
- If you attended a Division II school and you were eligible in your first year to practice and receive an athletics scholarship — but you were not eligible to compete — you were a partial qualifier. Only Division II schools use the partial-qualifier status.

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.

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.

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

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



WHEN CAN I PLAY?

There are several aspects of your college experience that determine when you may compete after transferring. Find the chart on the following pages that applies to you to figure out when you may compete.

Depending on your college experience, you may be able to compete as soon as you transfer or you may need to spend one academic year at your new school as a full-time student before you are eligible to compete.

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 get an athletics scholarship if they were academically eligible when they left their previous school.

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 compliance department 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 that academic term.

Additional progress-toward-degree rules from the NCAA, your new school or your new school's conference may affect when you can play. For more information, talk to staff members in the compliance office at your new school.

If you are an international student and attend a two-year college outside of the United States, use the rules for student-athletes at four-year schools in the [Four-Year Transfer Guide](#).

CASE STUDY

Tyler transferred to an NCAA institution before the beginning of the school year and is sitting out a year. He completed 12 credit hours in the fall term and 12 credit hours in the spring term. At his new school, students who take 12 credit hours are considered full-time students.

Did Tyler complete his academic year of residence?

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

CASE STUDY

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

Becca completed 12 hours in the fall term. In the spring, she enrolled for nine hours and was considered a part-time student.

Did Becca complete her academic year of residence?

No. Becca 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.

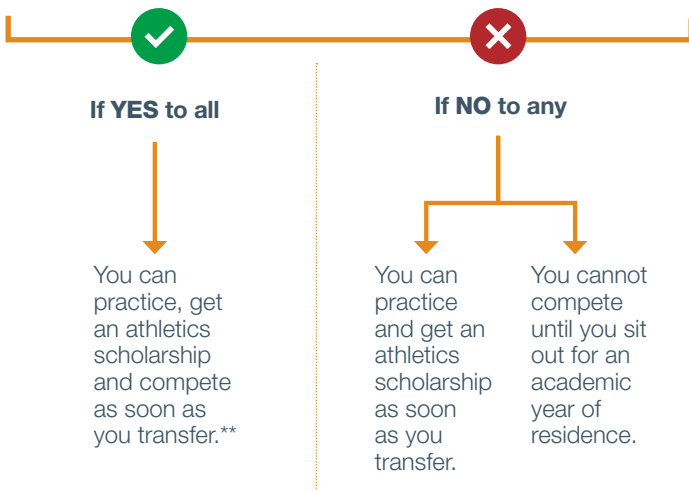
PLANNING TO GO DIVISION I • 2-4 TRANSFER

**You plan to attend a Division I school.
You have never attended a four-year school full time.**

You are a qualifier:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1 Complete at least **one semester** or **quarter** as a **full-time student**? *Summer school does not count.*
- 2 Complete an average of **12 transferable credit hours** in each term you attended full time?*
- 3 Earn a **GPA of 2.500** in those transferable credit hours?



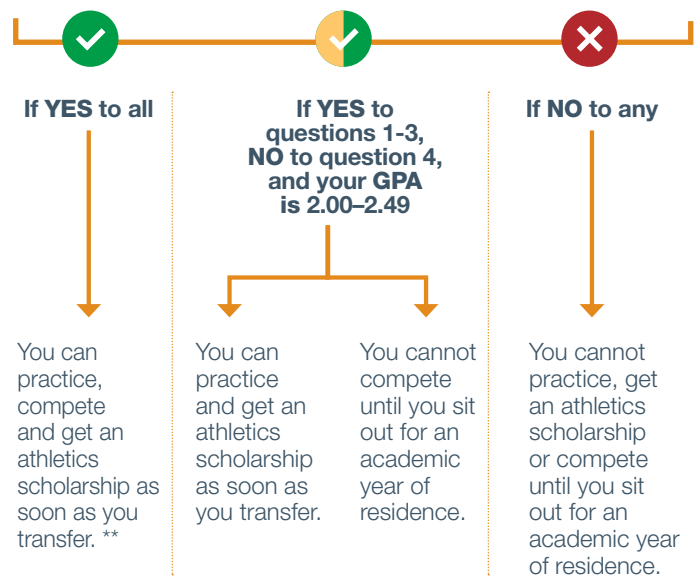
*You may not use more than two credit hours of physical education activity courses to fulfill the transferable degree credit and GPA requirements unless you are enrolling in a degree program requiring physical education activity courses.

**If you are a baseball or basketball student-athlete who transfers to a new school in the middle of the academic year, you may not compete until the fall term.

You are a nonqualifier or academic redshirt (or qualifier who does not meet criteria listed to the left side of this page):

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1 Graduate from your **two-year school**? You must have earned **25% of your credit hours** at the two-year school awarding your degree.
- 2 Complete at least **three semesters** or four quarters as a full-time student? *Summer school does not count.*
- 3 Complete **48 transferable credit hours** if your school uses semesters or **72 transferable credit hours** if your school uses quarters? *Your transferable credit hours **must include** all the following subjects:
 - **English:** Six hours if your school uses semesters or eight hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Math:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Natural/physical science:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
- 4 Earn a **GPA of 2.500** in those transferable credit hours?



*You may not use more than two credit hours of physical education activity courses to fulfill the transferable degree credit and GPA requirements unless you are enrolling in a degree program requiring physical education activity courses. Remedial English and math classes may not be used to satisfy this requirement.

**If you are a baseball or basketball student-athlete who transfers to a new school in the middle of the academic year, you may not compete until the fall term.

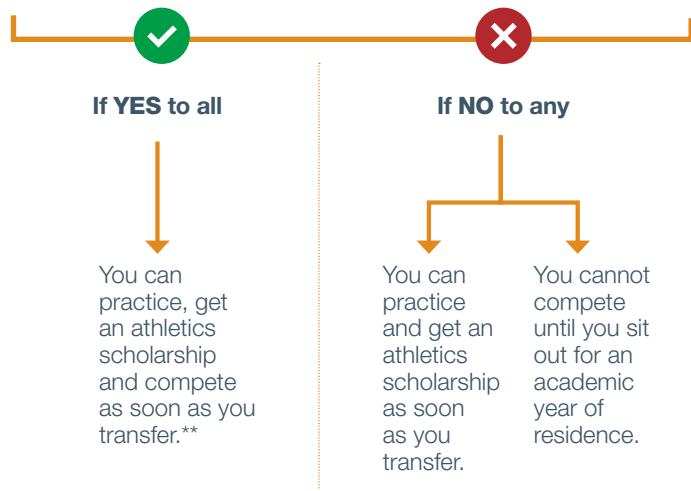
PLANNING TO GO DIVISION I • 4-2-4 TRANSFER

**You plan to attend a Division I school.
You attended a four-year school full time and now attend a two-year school full time.**

You are a qualifier:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1 **Graduate** from your **two-year** school? You must have earned **25%** of your credit hours at the two-year school **awarding your degree**.
- 2 Complete an average of **12 transferable credit hours** for **each term** you attended full time?*
- 3 Earn a **GPA of 2.500** in those transferable credit hours?
- 4 **Before competing** for your new NCAA Division I school, has **one calendar year** elapsed since your **last day** of enrollment at your original **four-year** school?



*You may not use more than two credit hours of physical education activity courses to fulfill the transferable degree credit and GPA requirements unless you are enrolling in a degree program requiring physical education activity courses.

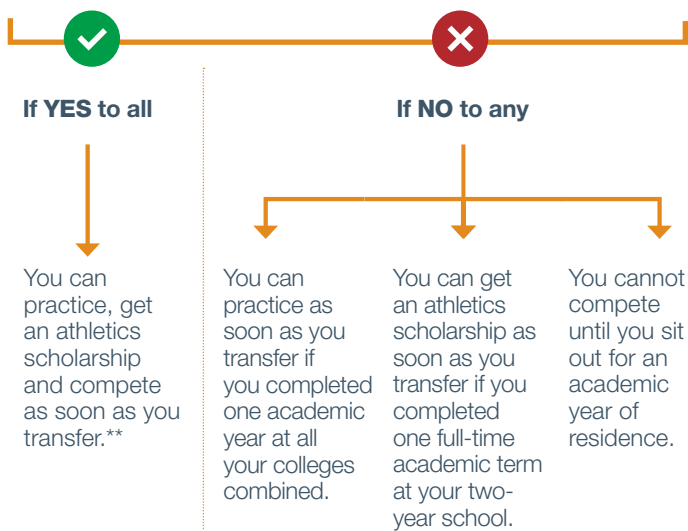
**If you are a baseball or basketball student-athlete who transfers to a new school in the middle of the academic year, you may not compete until the fall term.

A qualifier can also use the nonqualifier standard to avoid the year in residence.

You are a nonqualifier or academic redshirt:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1 **Graduate** from your **two-year** school? You must have earned **25%** of your credit hours at the two-year school **awarding your degree**.
- 2 Complete an average of **12 transferable credit hours** for **each term** you attended full time? *Your transferable credit hours **must include** all of the following subjects:
 - **English:** Six hours if your school uses semesters or eight hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Math:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Natural/physical science:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
- 3 Earn a **GPA of 2.500** in those transferable credit hours?
- 4 **Before competing** for your new NCAA Division I school, has **one calendar year** elapsed since your **last day** of enrollment at your original **four-year** school?



*You may not use more than two credit hours of physical education activity courses to fulfill the transferable degree credit and GPA requirements unless you are enrolling in a degree program requiring physical education activity courses.

Remedial English and math classes may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Transferable English, math and natural/physical science courses earned at previous four-year college may be used.

**If you are a baseball or basketball student-athlete who transfers to a new school in the middle of the academic year, you may not compete until the fall term.

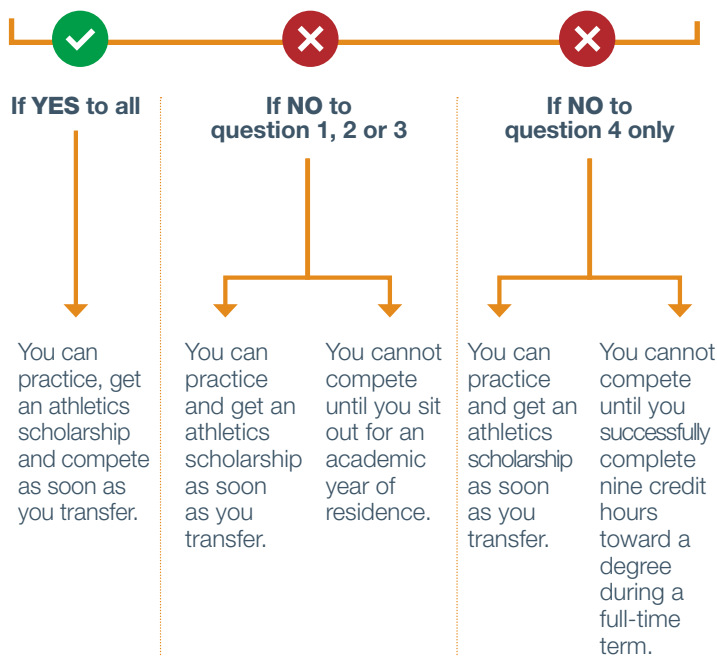
PLANNING TO GO DIVISION II • 2-4 TRANSFER

Additional DII 2-4 transfer information on page 14

You have never attended a four-year school full time, are a qualifier and have attended only one semester or quarter at a two-year school full time.

At your two-year school, did you:

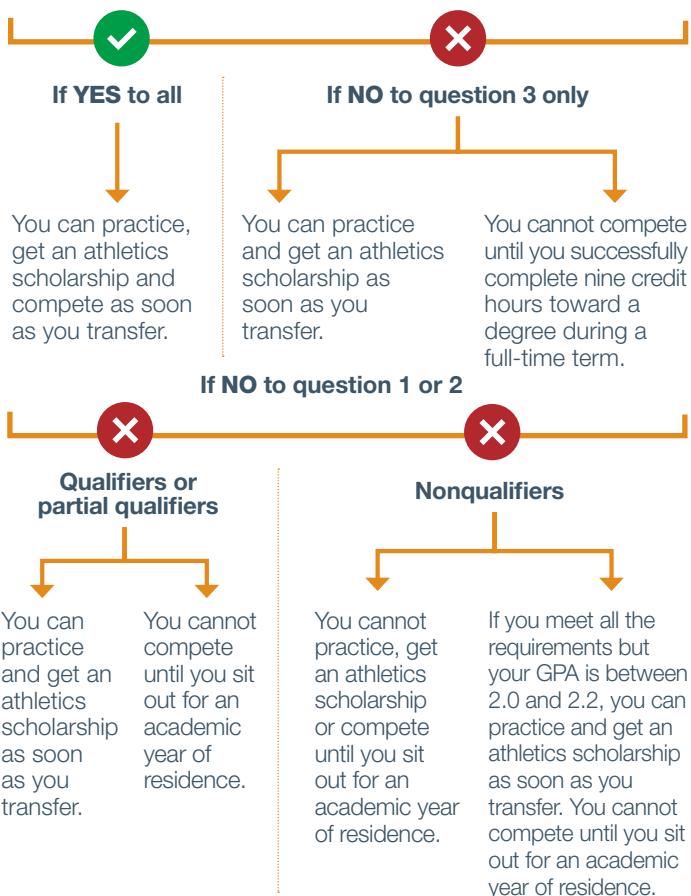
- 1** Complete only **one semester** or quarter as a **full-time** student? *Summer school does not count.*
- 2** Complete an average of **12 transferable credit hours** for the semester or quarter you attended full time?*
- 3** Earn a **GPA of 2.200** in all transferable credit hours?
- 4** Earn at least **nine transferable credit hours** during your one full-time term?



You have never attended a four-year school full time, have been enrolled for more than one full-time term in a two-year school but have not graduated and are a qualifier, partial qualifier or nonqualifier.

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1** Complete at least **two semesters** or three quarters as a **full-time** student? *Summer school does not count.*
- 2** Complete an average of **12 transferable credit hours** for each term you attended full time, earning a **GPA of 2.200** in all transferable credit hours? *Your transferable credit hours **must include all** the following subjects:
 - **English:** Six hours if your school uses semesters or eight hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Math:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Natural/physical science:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
- 3** Earn at least **nine transferable credit hours** during your last full-time term?



*You may not use more than two credit hours of physical education activity courses to fulfill the transferable degree credit and GPA requirements unless you are enrolling in a degree program requiring physical education activity courses.

Remedial courses may not be used to satisfy these requirements.

Disclaimer: Your academics and athletics eligibility must be certified by the athletics department's compliance staff at the NCAA school you are transferring to.

PLANNING TO GO DIVISION II • 2-4 TRANSFER

Continued from page 13

You have never attended a four-year school full time.
You graduated from your two-year school.

If you are a qualifier, partial qualifier
or nonqualifier:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1 Complete at least **two semesters** or three quarters as a **full-time** student? *Summer school does not count.*
- 2 Earn at least **25%** of the credit hours needed to fulfill the degree requirement at the **two-year school** awarding your degree?
- 3 Earn at least **nine transferable credit hours** during your last full-time term?



If YES to all

You can practice, get an athletics scholarship and compete as soon as you transfer.

If NO to
question 2 only

Please refer to the right-hand column of page 17 for the transfer option more closely related to your situation.

If NO to
question 3 only

You can practice and get an athletics scholarship as soon as you transfer.

You cannot compete until you successfully complete nine credit hours toward a degree during a full-time term.

Disclaimer: Your academics and athletics eligibility must be certified by the athletics department's compliance staff at the NCAA school you are transferring to.

PLANNING TO GO DIVISION II • 4-2-4 TRANSFER

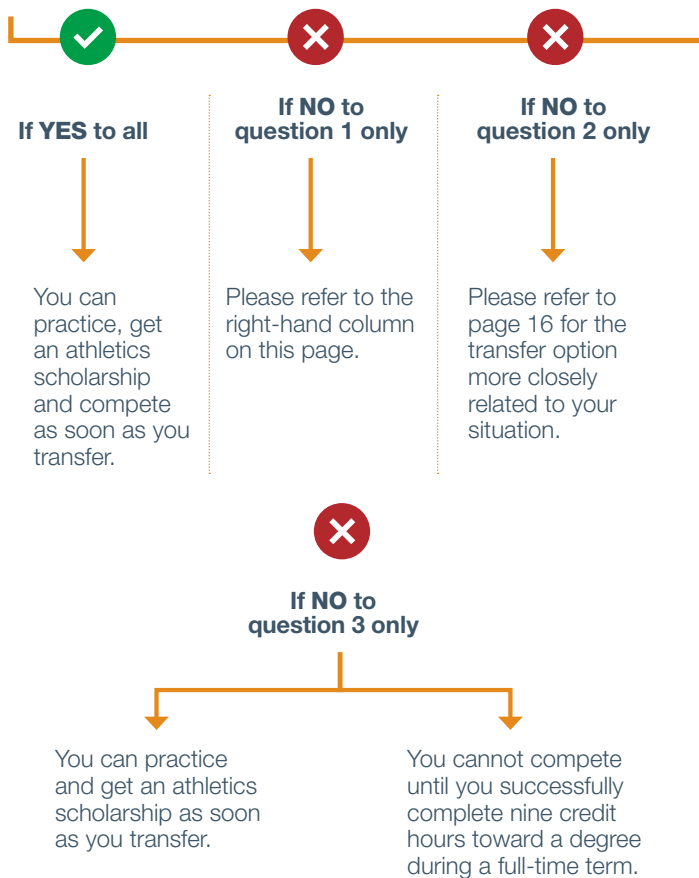
Additional DII 4-2-4 transfer information on page 16

You attended a four-year school full time and now attend a two-year school full time.

If you attended only one semester or quarter at a two-year school full time and graduated and are a qualifier, partial qualifier or nonqualifier:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1** Graduate from your **two-year** school?
- 2** Complete only **one semester** or quarter as a **full-time student**?
- 3** Earn at least **nine transferable credit hours** during your one full-time term?



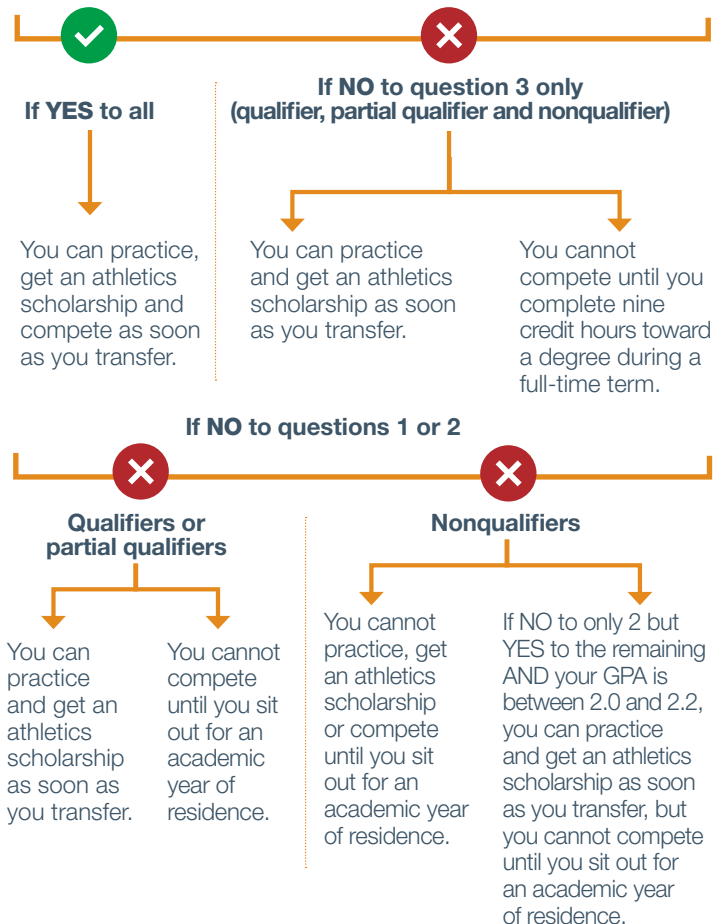
**You may not use more than two credit hours of physical education activity courses to fulfill the transferable degree credit and GPA requirements unless you are enrolling in a degree program requiring physical education activity courses.*

Remedial English and math classes may not be used. Transferable English, math and natural/physical science courses earned at previous four-year college may be used.

If you did not graduate from the two-year school and are a qualifier, partial qualifier or nonqualifier:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1** Complete at least **two semesters** or **three quarters** as a **full-time student**? *Summer school does not count.*
- 2** Complete an average of **12 transferable credit hours** for each term you attended **full time**, earning a **GPA of 2.200** in all transferable credit hours? **Your transferable credit hours must include all the following subjects:*
 - **English:** Six hours if your school uses semesters or eight hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Math:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
 - **Natural/physical science:** Three hours if your school uses semesters or four hours if your school uses quarters.
- 3** Earn at least **nine transferable credit hours** during your last full-time term?



Disclaimer: Your academics and athletics eligibility must be certified by the athletics department's compliance staff at the NCAA school you are transferring to.

PLANNING TO GO DIVISION II • 4-2-4 TRANSFER

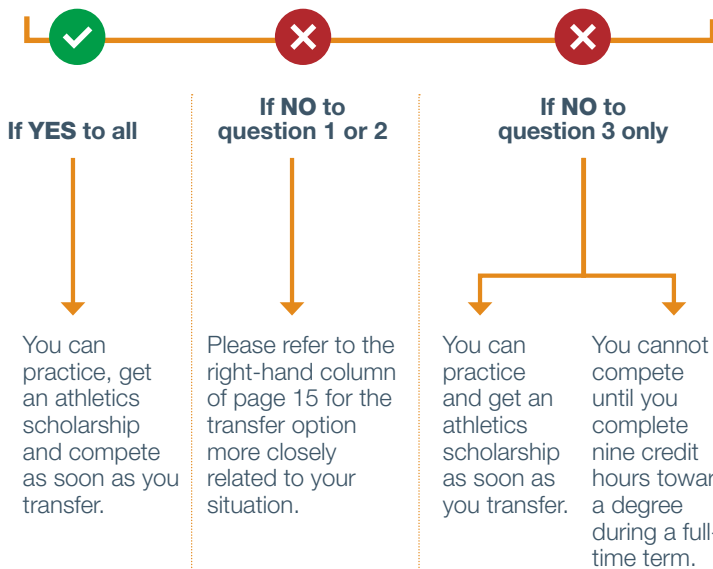
Continued from page 15

You attended a four-year school full time and now attend a two-year school full time.
You attended the two-year school for at least two semesters or three quarters full time and graduated.

If you are a qualifier, partial qualifier or nonqualifier:

At your two-year school, did you:

- 1 Complete at least **two semesters** or three quarters as a full-time student?
- 2 Graduate and earn at least **25%** of the **credit hours** needed to fulfill the **degree requirement** at the two-year school awarding your degree?
- 3 Complete at least **nine transferable credit hours** during your last full-time term?

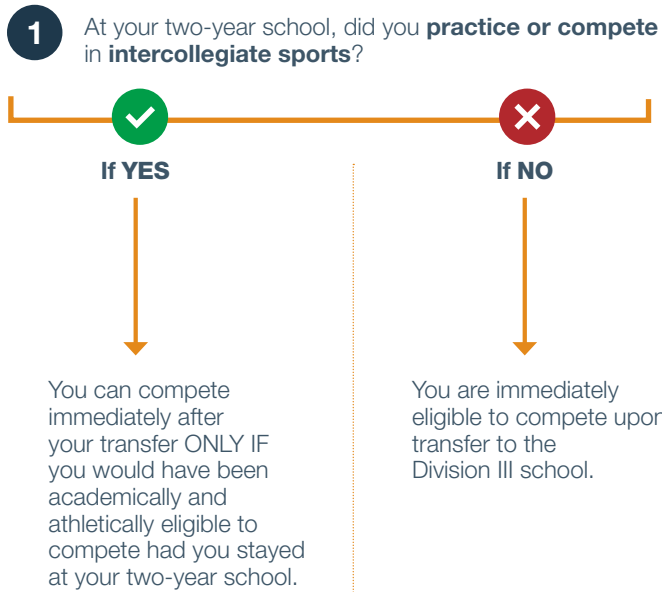


Disclaimer: Your academics and athletics eligibility must be certified by the athletics department's compliance staff at the NCAA school you are transferring to.

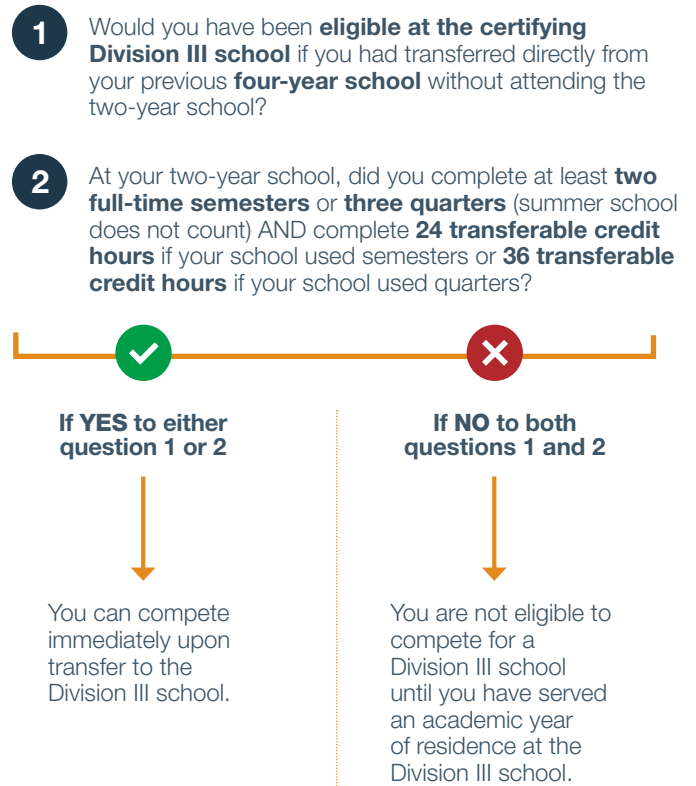
PLANNING TO GO DIVISION III

You plan to attend a Division III school.

If you have never attended a four-year school:



If you attended a four-year school and now attend a two-year school:



TRANSFER 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. Talk to the compliance staff at your new school about whether you qualify for a transfer exception. Your new school will decide if you qualify for a transfer exception. Lastly, if you don't meet a transfer exception, then you will need to meet all transfer criteria listed within the 2-4 or 4-2-4 sections outlined previously in this guide.

BASIC RESTRICTIONS FOR TRANSFER EXCEPTIONS

There are several basic restrictions for transfer exceptions:

- If you were a partial qualifier or a nonqualifier 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](#).
- If you signed a National Letter of Intent 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 program on [page 23](#).
- You may not use an exception if you are completing a year of residence at your current school.
- If you are a baseball or basketball student-athlete and transfer to a Division I school at the start of winter or spring term, you will not be eligible to compete until the next fall term.
- If you are a tennis student-athlete transferring to a Division I school at the start of winter or spring term and you have competed or received an athletics scholarship from your current school during the same academic year, you will not be eligible to compete until the next fall term.

CASE STUDY

Tim is a nonqualifier. He attended a two-year college for one year and played football. He then decided to transfer to an NCAA Division II institution, where he was told by its compliance staff that he was not eligible to compete and had to sit one year in academic residence with his new NCAA school. His transferable GPA was a 2.1 and he transferred a total of 26 credits, including the required six credits in English, three credits in math and three credits in science.

Why is Tim not eligible to compete in fall 2018 at his new school?

For a 2-4 transfer going Division II who completed one year of classes at a two-year college, a required transferable GPA of 2.2 or higher is needed for competition in the first academic year attending the Division II school. But because he averaged 12 transferable credits per the two semesters completed at the two-year college and his GPA fell between 2.000 and 2.200, Tim is able to ask the coaching staff and compliance staff at his new NCAA school if he can receive athletics aid and practice during his academic year of residence. Before Tim can play in games, he must successfully complete his academic year of residence at his new NCAA school.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER ATTENDED A FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL

1. Your sport is dropped or is not sponsored at your two-year school and you plan to attend a Division I or II school.

If your current school drops your sport, or if it did not sponsor your sport while you were a student, you may use an exception to compete immediately after transferring to a Division I or II school.

You may use this exception only if you transfer after your current school publicly announces it will drop your sport.

To qualify for this exception, you must have a GPA of at least 2.500 for Division I or 2.200 for Division II.

2. You plan to attend a Division II school and have not been recruited by that school.

If you have never been recruited by the Division II school you plan to attend, you may use an exception to compete immediately after transferring to a Division I or II school.

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

- You have not received an athletics scholarship.
- You have not participated in any athletics activities or meetings for more than 14 consecutive days.
- You were eligible for admission at the Division II school before you enrolled at the two-year college.

3. You have not participated in your sport for two years and plan to attend a Division I or II school.

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 or competed with an intercollegiate sports team for two years before practicing or competing with your new school.
- You have not practiced for more than 14 consecutive days with an intercollegiate sports 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.

4. You plan to attend a Division III school.

If you plan to attend a Division III school, you may be eligible to compete immediately if you meet an exception. To qualify you must meet any of the following conditions:

- You have never practiced nor competed in intercollegiate athletics.
- You would have been academically and athletically eligible at the time of transfer.
- You have not practiced or competed with an intercollegiate sports team for two consecutive years.

CASE STUDY

Marcus is an NCAA qualifier out of high school and decided to attend an NCAA Division I school on a soccer scholarship. He just finished his freshman year but because of lack of playing time, he is now wanting to transfer to a two-year college, with the ultimate goal of returning to another four-year Division I program.

What criteria must Marcus complete while attending the two-year college in order to be eligible for practice, competition and athletics aid at his next Division I four-year school? Marcus must graduate from the two-year school, while averaging 12 transferable credit hours for each semester of attendance and a transferable GPA of 2.5 or higher while attending the two-year school.

Can Marcus compete while he is attending the two-year school? Marcus should consult with the two-year school on the specific requirements for two-year college participation as they vary by state and association. *Please note:* Competing for the two-year school would use a season of eligibility per NCAA legislation.

Who would certify his transferable GPA and credit upon enrolling at the new Division I school? Marcus would need to speak with the director of athletics compliance at the specific Division I school in which he is looking to enroll.

IF YOU HAVE ATTENDED A FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL AND NOW ATTEND A TWO-YEAR SCHOOL

If you have attended a four-year school but now attend a two-year school and want to transfer to an NCAA school, you may use an exception to compete immediately if you meet one of the following conditions:

1. **You want to return to your original school.**
2. **Your sport was not sponsored at your first four-year school.**
3. **You have not participated in your sport for two years.**
4. **You plan to attend a Division II school and have not been recruited by that school.**
5. **You plan to attend a Division III school.**

1. You want to return to your original school.

If you attend a two-year school but want to transfer back to a Division I school you previously attended, you may use an exception to compete immediately if you were not sitting out an academic year of residence at the Division I school when you transferred to the two-year school.

2. Your sport was not sponsored at your first four-year school.

If the first four-year school that you attended did not sponsor your sport while you were a student, you may be able to use this exception to compete immediately after transferring to a Division I or II school if you meet all the following conditions:

- You have not attended another four-year school that offered your sport.
- You completed an average of 12 transferable credit hours at your two-year school.
- You earned a GPA of at least 2.500 for Division I or 2.200 for Division II in those transferable credit hours.
- You are transferring to a Division I school and you completed two semesters or three quarters at your two-year school. Summer school does not count.

3. 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 or competed with an intercollegiate sports team for two years before practicing or competing with your new school.
- You have not practiced for more than 14 consecutive days with an intercollegiate sports 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.

CASE STUDY

Isaac enrolled at a Division I school, was a qualifier and was on the swimming and diving team.

He then transferred to a two-year school and was on the swimming and diving team there as well. He did not receive an Associate of Arts (AA) degree.

Now, Isaac wants to return to his original Division I school.

Must Isaac serve an academic year of residence at the Division I school?

No. Even though he does not meet the requirements because he did not earn his AA degree from the two-year school, Isaac does not have to serve an academic year of residence at the Division I school because he is returning to his original school and was not sitting out an academic year of residence when he transferred.

4. You plan to attend a Division II school and have not been recruited by that school.

If you have never been recruited by the Division II school you plan to attend, you may use an exception to compete immediately after transferring to a Division I or II school.

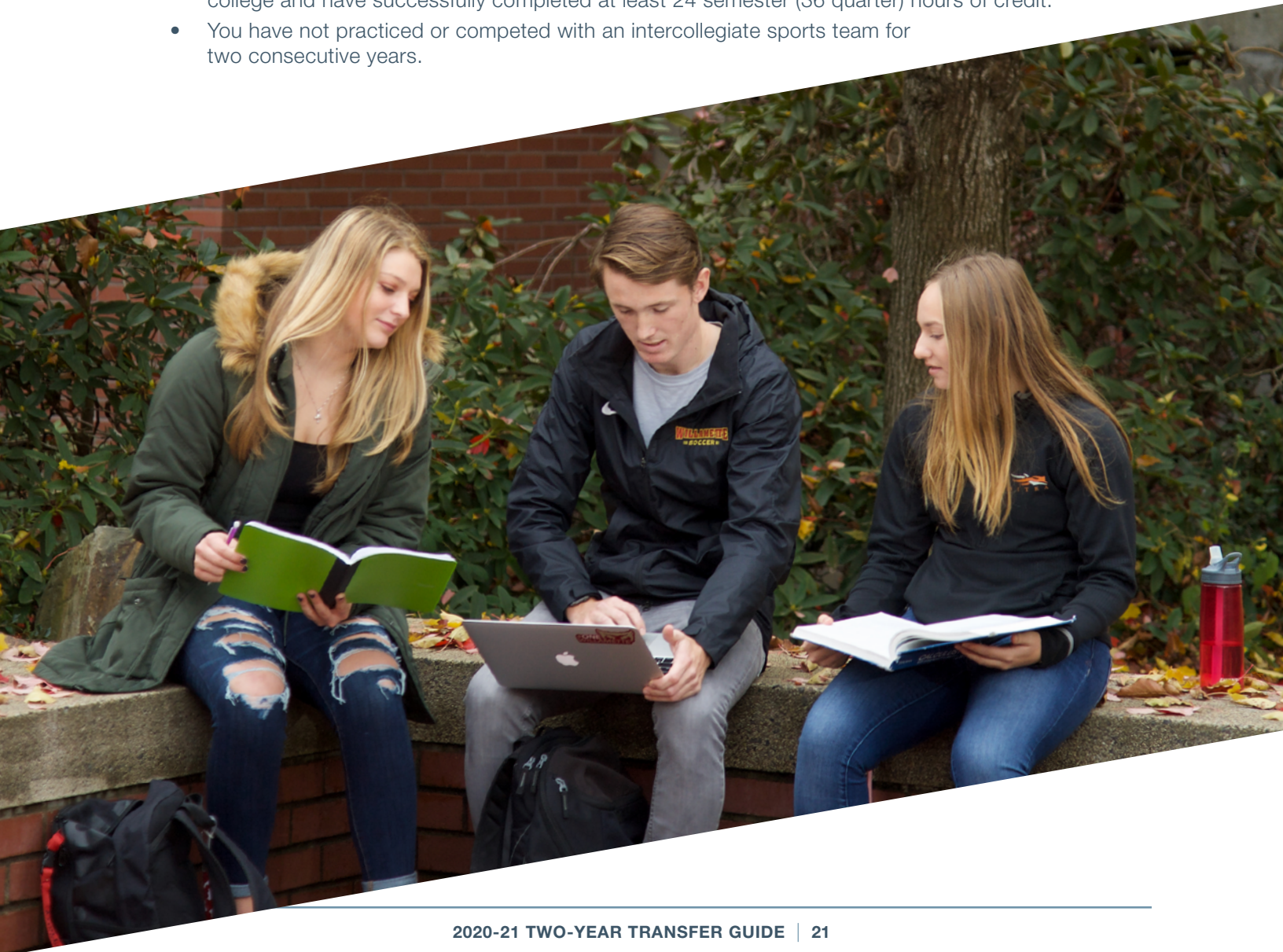
To qualify for this exception, you must meet all the following conditions:

- You have not received an athletics scholarship.
- You have not participated in any athletics activities or meetings for more than 14 consecutive days.
- You were eligible for admission at the Division II school before you enrolled at the two-year college.

5. You plan to attend a Division III school.

If you plan to attend a Division III school, you may be eligible to compete immediately if you meet an exception. To qualify you must meet any of the following conditions:

- You have never practiced nor competed in intercollegiate athletics.
- You would have been academically and athletically eligible at the time of transfer if you stayed at your original four-year school.
- If you were not academically and athletically eligible at your original four-year school, then you must have been enrolled full time for at least two semesters (three quarters) at your current two-year college and have successfully completed at least 24 semester (36 quarter) hours of credit.
- You have not practiced or competed with an intercollegiate sports team for two consecutive years.





ELIGIBILITY CLOCK

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 (*rules affecting 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: NCAA schools that are part of the 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 the NLI's website at nationalletter.org. The NLI program is not administered by the NCAA.

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 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 NCAA transfer portal within *two* business days of receipt of the student-athlete’s request.

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. 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 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 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 for 30 days 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.

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

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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