**NCAA Eligibility Center Requirements**

When coaches recruit *student*-athletes, they don’t overlook academics, and—thanks to the Eligibility Center—the NCAA ensures that they won’t.

**What exactly is the NCAA Eligibility Center?**

An organization within the NCAA, the Eligibility Center determines the academic eligibility and amateur status for all NCAA **Division I** and **Division II**athletes by evaluating their high school records.

You only need to go through the Eligibility Center if you plan on attending a Division I or Division II program. However, the NCAA revamped their website experience to include a free profile. So, you now have a choice: you can create a profile page (where you don’t get cleared) or a certification account (where you’re cleared). Here’s the difference:

* **Profile page**: If you’re not quite sure which division you will compete in, or if you’re considering attending a Division III or junior college program, which don’t have academic requirements, then you should select a profile page. It’s free and you can always transition to a certification account.
* **Certification account**: If you're being recruited by a Division I or Division II program, then you need to register for a certification account to be cleared through the Eligibility Center. It costs **$90** (**$150** for international students).

**Eligibility Requirements**

**For Division I**

At the Division I level, the NCAA uses a [**sliding scale**](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Quick_Reference_Sheet.pdf), which combines your core course GPA and your SAT or ACT score, to determine whether you qualify. For example, if your GPA was a 3.0, you need a minimum SAT score (Math and Reading only) of 620, or an ACT sum score of 52 to compete. But if your GPA was a 2.5, you would need a higher SAT or ACT sum score—820 or 68 to be exact.

The NCAA requires that you complete 16 [**approved core courses**](https://web1.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/hsAction?hsActionSubmit=searchHighSchool) (this determines your GPA on the sliding scale). Note that you need to earn a minimum GPA of 2.3. Here are the required 16 core courses:

* 4 years of English
* 3 years of Math (Algebra 1 or higher)
* 2 years of Science (Natural or Physical + 1yr lab if offered)
* 2 years of Social Science
* 1 year of extra Math, English, Natural or Physical Science
* 4 years of extra core courses (from any of the above or Foreign Language, Religion, or Philosophy)

10 of these 16 core courses need to be taken before your senior year, with seven of those 10 being an English, math or science class. Did you catch all that? Here’s the bottom line: **get familiar with what’s required—and by when—early to avoid any unwelcome surprises**.

**For Division II**

You must complete 16 [**approved core courses**](https://web1.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/hsAction?hsActionSubmit=searchHighSchool) with a minimum 2.2 core course GPA, as well as a sum score of 820 on the SAT or a sum score of 68 on the ACT. Approved core courses you must complete include:

* 3 years of English
* 2 years of Math (Algebra I or higher)
* 2 years of Science (Natural or Physical + 1 year lab if offered)
* 2 years of Social Science
* 3 years of extra Math, English, Natural or Physical Science
* 4 years of extra core courses (from any of the above or Foreign Language, Religion, or Philosophy)

**General Information**

The Eligibility Center only considers NCAA approved core courses taken in your first 8 semesters when calculating your GPA and doesn't take into account plus or minus grades (i.e. B+, B, and B- all equal 3 points). Exam sum scores are calculated by combining the Math and Reading portions of the SAT and the English, Math, Reading, and Science portions of the ACT. If you take the test more than once, your best individual sub-scores will be used (you're not penalized for taking it multiple times).

**Insider Tip**: If you qualified for ACT or SAT fee waivers, you also qualify for an Eligibility Center fee waiver. Just have an authorized high school official submit your fee waiver documentation online after you complete your registration.

Your eligibility requirements are not actually complete until your high school submits your transcripts and proof of graduation following your finial semester of high school. It's important to meet with your guidance counselor to stay on track with your core courses and make sure they send your final official transcripts (you can't send copies).

One last step: complete the amateurism questionnaire and sign the final authorization signature online on or after April 1 of your senior year.  **Please remember that meeting the NCAA academic rules doesn't guarantee your admission into a college. You must still apply and be accepted to the institution you want to attend.**

**The Registration Process**

We recommend that you register for the NCAA Eligibility Center during your sophomore year. By your junior year, you will be able to submit your transcripts/test scores and you must be registered with the Eligibility Center in order to take an [**official visit**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/62) to a Division I or Division II program.

By registering, you're completing the “student release form” and sending it to the NCAA. You must also print off the “transcript release form, “sign it and give copies 1 & 2 directly to your high school counselor. That will authorize the NCAA to request a transcript from your school. It also authorizes the NCAA to send academic information to all colleges that request eligibility status. If no college requests your status, the information will not be distributed.

**Sending Transcripts and Test Scores**

Official ACT or SAT scores must be sent from the testing agency. Test scores that appear on a high school transcript will not be accepted. Once your test scores are posted, you can send them to the NCAA via [**www.collegeboard.org**](http://www.collegeboard.org/), **OR** as you're taking the ACT or SAT, enter the code "**9999**" in the appropriate area on the scantron and your scores will be sent directly to the Eligibility Center.

Likewise, your transcripts must be submitted through your high school guidance office. Report cards or transcripts submitted from an outside source will not be accepted. Meet with your guidance counselor to ensure this is taken care of.

[**Contact Periods**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/17)

The NCAA Recruiting Calendars outline the rules set by the NCAA on when and how college coaches can proactively recruit athletes. Each calendar is broken into different periods: the evaluation period, dead period, quiet period and contact period.

What is the NCAA Contact Period?

Contact periods are specific times outlined by the NCAA where NCAA DI and DII coaches can make in-home visits and meet with recruits on their high school campus. In addition to visiting recruits, coaches can call, email and text recruits. This is one of the most active recruiting periods, with college programs spreading out across the country to get time with their most valuable recruits.

**Insider tip**: College coaches aren’t allowed to visit or meet with recruits off of their college campus until after September 1 of their Junior year of high school. That said, if you are the one calling or emailing coaches, you can open lines of communication before your junior year.

**PREPARE FOR VISITS FROM COLLEGE COACHES**

When the contact period starts, don’t expect college coaches to just knock at your door unannounced. Visiting athletes at their home/high school is expensive, and coaches reserve this kind of recruiting activity only for their most valuable recruits. Having coaches visit you during the contact period is a great sign you are a high-value recruit. Here is how to put yourself in position to get coach visits:

1. **Establish contact well before the recruiting calendar rules start** – with online recruiting and the growth of travel teams, the recruiting process has sped up. If you are waiting until coaches can contact you, you are going to be falling behind. Enlist the help of your high school and/or club coaches and establish contact with colleges you are interested in before your junior year of high school.
2. **Give coaches the chance to evaluate you before they have to watch you in person**– most college programs are trying to get their recruiting done on a tight budget. This means they expect to be able to make initial evaluations of recruits through online video. Make sure you have highlight or skills tape online where coaches can get a good sense of your skills.
3. **Coordinate your efforts with your current coaches** – college coaches are restricted in when and how often they can communicate with a recruit, but there are no rules about their communications with a recruit’s high school or club coaches. Make sure your coaches are aware of your desire to get recruited and that you are proactively reaching out to college coaches.
4. **Keep college coaches informed**– once you’ve gone through the trouble of getting a college program interested in you, make sure you are keeping them informed on your recruiting activities. Coaches aren’t going to be able to communicate with you as much as they would like, so getting updates on where you are competing, how your grades are doing, etc. is really helpful for college coaches.

**What is the NCAA Dead Period?**

NCAA dead periods are designed to allow college coaches to have some down time from traveling and in-person recruiting. During the dead period, college coaches are not allowed to have face-to-face contact with a recruit or their family on or off of their college campus. In addition, they are not allowed to watch a recruit in person or visit their high school during a dead period. College coaches can continue to write, use social media, text, and call recruits.

**RECRUITING IS STILL HAPPENING DURING THE DEAD PERIOD**

The common misconception during the dead period is that coaches can’t “recruit” athletes. That is misunderstood to mean, they can’t call, text or send mail, but that isn’t true. Coaches can and do continue to recruit during the dead period, but it is unlikely they will be discovering new talent during that time. The dead period is a break from traveling, but they are still staying in touch on the phone and organizing trips for when recruiting opens back up.

The dead period falls late in the recruiting process (junior or senior year) when many coaches are making the second and third evaluations of their recruits. For the dead period to really impact your recruiting, that means coaches will have been calling and visiting your school once the recruiting calendar kicked in. Reach out early and often to get on the radar of college coaches before they begin scheduling evaluations.

What is the NCAA evaluation period?

The NCAA evaluation period is a specific time of year when college coaches are allowed to watch an athlete in person or visit their school, but they are NOT allowed to communicate with that athlete off the college campus. This means coaches will visit your school, practices or games, but they won’t be allowed to talk with you while they are there.

Not all sports have evaluation periods; the only sports with evaluation periods are D1 football (FBS and FCS), D1 Men’s/Women’s Basketball, D1 Women’s Volleyball, D1 Softball, D2 Football, and D2 Men’s/Women’s Basketball.

**WHAT GOES ON DURING AN EVALUATION PERIOD?**

College coaches will use this opportunity to watch an athlete play in person and visit their school.

* **Watching an athlete in person** – During evaluation periods, coaches are either attending “made for recruiting” tournaments and showcases or attending an athlete’s practice (most common in football). Watching an athlete in person is much less about assessing their ability than it is evaluating the other things going on during competition. The number one things coaches are during is evaluating your body language during a game.
* **Visiting the athlete’s school** – College coaches will also make a point to visit a recruit’s school. While they can’t talk to the athlete, they will do things like check with their counselor to get an update on grades and test scores, as well as spend time talking to their coach to get a sense for what kind of person they are.

**HOW DO I GET COACHES TO WATCH ME DURING AN EVALUATION PERIOD?**

College programs have a limited number of evaluation days per recruiting class. As we’ve explained before, the recruiting process is a funnel and watching recruits during the evaluation period is something that happens much later in the recruiting process.

In other words, don’t expect coaches to just show up at your games or school. Instead, you need to be executing a specific recruiting plan to connect with them and allow them to make an initial evaluation via an online profile or online film. If they like what they see, they might schedule time to watch you play in person or visit your school for a more in-depth evaluation.

WHAT IS THE NCAA QUIET PERIOD?

The NCAA definition: “a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents and may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools.”

All this means is that college coaches won’t be able to go watch you play in person or visit your school. They can still call, email, text you or your family; in otherwords, there is still a lot of recruiting happening.

**Insider tip**: The quiet period only applies to NCAA DI and DII coaches. Coaches at DIII or NAIA schools can watch a recruit in person whenever they would like.

**TAKE UNOFFICIAL VISITS DURING A QUIET PERIOD**

The most common thing happening during quiet periods is to see athletes making unofficial visits. Because coaches can’t visit a recruit, many recruits take the opportunity to go to the coach, see the campus and get a tour of the facilities. Coaches and recruits are allowed to email, text and call, so it is fairly easy to arrange a visit, as long as the coach is actively recruiting you.

**DOES THE QUIET PERIOD REALLY MATTER?**

For top recruits receiving a lot of interest, it can be a nice break from coaches coming to your school and potentially your house to meet with you. Similarly, college coaches like to know there is a break in their travel schedule and they won’t be flying around to visit all of the recruits on their board.

All of that said, for the average recruit receiving little or no recruiting interest, the quiet period won’t change anything. You are still free to email, text or call coaches and you should be doing that. For non-NCAA DI/DII coaches or coaches with tight recruiting budgets, they aren’t going to be on the road everyday of the evaluation period, so “taking a break” during the quiet period isn’t really necessary.

**Recruiting Calendars**

Be sure to check the [**NCAA Sport Specific Calendars**](http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/resources/recruiting-calendars) to identify when the contact, dead, evaluation and quiet periods are for your sport!

[**Visits FAQ**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/19)

**BELOW ARE IS A LIST OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WE'RE ASKED ABOUT COLLEGE VISITS. IF YOU'D LIKE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS, PLEASE VISIT THE**[**OFFICIAL VISITS**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/62)**AND**[**UNOFFICIAL VISITS**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/47)**PAGES OF YOUR RMS, OR WATCH THIS WEBINAR -**[**COACH COMMUNICATION 401: VISITS**](https://youtu.be/u6XATAYDKCo)**.**

**What is the definition of an official visit vs. unofficial visit?**

By definition an official visit is paid for by the college, an unofficial is paid for by you.

On an official visit the NCAA allows a school to pay for lodging, transportation, meals, and entertainment. So that includes airfare, rental car, and 3 meals a day. But please be aware that the school is NOT allowed to pay for your parents. The school may only pay for expenses related to the student-athlete. So for example, if you and your parents stay in a hotel the coach is able to pay for it. If you stay overnight with a member of the team on campus, the coach may not pay for your parents hotel.

On an unofficial visit they are able to provide tickets to 3 sporting events under $100, receive transportation to an off-site venue, and the student-athlete may stay overnight with a team member.

**Do all DI & DII schools offer official visits?**

No. Please remember that each school differs in policy. Just because official visits are allowed by the NCAA, does not mean each school offers them. Whenever you speak with a college coach about scheduling a campus visit, ask if it will be an official or unofficial visit.

**Can you take an official visit to a DIII program?**

There is a common misconception that DIII schools do not offer official visits because they do not offer athletic scholarships. Fortunately, that's false! You are allowed an **unlimited** number of official visits to DIII, NAIA and JUCO programs. However, DIII schools tend to have a limited recruiting budget and therefore aren't usually able to offer paid airfare, hotel, etc. Just like DI and DII, DIII schools differ in policy. Just because official visits are allowed does not mean each school offers them.

**What does it mean if the coach doesn't offer an official during senior year?**

There could be several reasons why you don't get offered an official visit during your senior year. Keep in mind, official visits are rare outside of the DI and DII level, so do be disheartened if you are a DIII, NAIA or JUCO prospect that wasn't offered an official visit.

At the DI or DII level, the most common reason for not receiving an offer for an official visit offer is because you are likely not a top recruit for that program. Always ask questions and find out where you are on the recruiting list before visiting a school. Also ask what the schools policy is on official visits.

The next most common reason is that the program doesn't currently have a budget for official visits. If you are getting serious interest from a school that cannot afford official visits, the coach will likely schedule an unofficial visit to get you on campus. **\*\*Note:** Many schools are not fully-funded enough to provide airfare, but will offer to pay for meals and lodging. If they do, that **IS** an official visit. Always clarify with the coach whether it's an official and unofficial.

Lastly, the school may not offer official visits at all. The NCAA allows official visits at DI and DII programs but each school has the right to choose whether or not they offer official visits.

**Are student-athletes allowed to tryout or practice with the team?**

As an NCAA rule, DI and DIII schools do not allow tryouts. On an official or unofficial visit, you may participate in workouts that are not organized or observed by coaching staff. However, they must not be designed to test your athletic ability.

DII schools are allowed to conduct one tryout in the off-season of your sport during senior year.

**Are there any times when visits are not allowed?**

No, you are allowed to take a visit at any time. However, there are important time frames, such as a dead period, in which you should avoid scheduling a campus visit. During a dead period, a college coach is not allowed to have face-to-face interaction with either you or your parents.

As a recruit, one of your goals during a campus visit should be to meet with the coaching staff. This is why it is so important to know what is allowed during any type of [**Contact Period**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/17), and why it is so important to schedule your visit over a conversation with that college coach.

**When should visits be scheduled?**

You should be trying to schedule visits right away. The best time to make visits during Junior year is spring and summer. Remember that December and early January are often times when coaches are on winter vacation. Some coaches may be out of the office during the summer and coaches are often too busy during their season.

**Should you go on group admissions tours, recruit days, or recruitment weekends?**

It is in your best interest to meet with a coach when you take a college visit (if possible). Many times you get very little time to spend with the coach personally on a recruitment day. Recruit days/recruitment weekends are often offered to many athletes as well. They are not specifically for top prospects for that program.

It really gives you no gauge about how interested the coach is in you personally. We recommend asking the coach for a personal visit on another weekend.

**Should a student-athlete bring up a visit or wait until a coach offers one?**

You should always bring it up! Many NCSA athletes are far ahead of others in the recruiting game because they know their next steps and are proactively working to complete them. You should really let the coaches know what YOUR recruiting timeline is. This is your recruiting experience and your college choice. You have every right to inquire about how it's going to work.

**How do students and parents schedule visits?**

The key to setting up visits is communicating with the coach. The better your relationship with the coach, the easier it will be to schedule a visit.

You must call or email the coach to inform him or her that you are coming to campus and would like to set up a meeting. Always contact the coach well in advance. If you do not let a coach know about your visit, you might miss out on anything that coach may want you to do during the visit or may miss meeting with that coach at all!

If you are trying to schedule a visit to a program where you haven't had communication with the coach, send an introduction email, then follow-up with a phone call to the coach. If you already have a relationship with the coach it should be easy. Just ask, "Coach, I am in the process of scheduling some college visits and would like to come to your school. Would you be willing and interested in meeting me?"

**What do you bring to a visit?**

When you go on a visit, bring along a printed copy of your profile, transcripts or report card, any recommendation letters, a list of questions, your video, as well as anything else you have that promotes your abilities.

**What exactly do you do on a visit?**

During a campus visit you will often tour the campus, meet with the coach, meet with the players, tour the athletic facilities, meet with the admissions department and sometimes with a professor(s). Depending on the visit, you might attend an athletic event or stay overnight with a player. Overnight visits give you the best overall feel for the school and the opportunity to speak with someone who has been in your shoes!

**What should you be looking for on a visit to determine whether the school is a good fit?**

When you're on a visit, make sure you get along with everyone and you feel that you will be able to have a good relationship with them. This is why asking questions and being proactive is so important.

You will need to talk with these coaches and open the lines of communication now to help determine which schools will be the best fit for your needs and personality. Make sure your future teammates seem friendly, fun, and that you will be able to make friends with them too! Make sure to see how they interact with the coaches. Do they get along, do they have fun, do they respect them? These factors are the MOST IMPORTANT when on a visit.

Right away, you should be able to see the positive interactions between the coaches and players. These people will become your second family for the next four years, and hopefully the rest of your life! Look at it this way, if you get sick, hurt, or something happens in your life--they will be there for you.

Also, don't hesitate to talk with freshmen and sophomores to get their perspective on their first-year experiences. Always take notes regarding your visit. This will help you to remember things you might otherwise forget when comparing campus visits in the future.

Focus on: names and titles of people you meet, conditions of facilities and equipment, impressions, policies.

**What questions are appropriate to ask?**

During a campus visit, you should ask questions that you help you determine whether or not the school is a good fit. Don't spend time on questions their school website can answer! For example, don't ask "what is the enrollment at ---? Instead, ask questions like "Based on my strengths and the way you run the team, this is why I see myself ...Where do you see me fitting in with your team?"

For a list of specific questions to ask and questions coaches may ask you, visit [**Questions to Ask Coaches**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/45).

**Will a coach ask you to commit?**

This really depends on the school and the relationship you have with the coach. Most of the time, a coach will ask you to commit or offer you a scholarship while on an official visit, particularly to a DI or DII program. Remember, official visits are typically for top prospects for that program that coaches are seriously interested in.

Unofficial visits are much more common, and you don't have to be a serious prospect to take one. The unofficial visit can be used as a way for you to further evaluate the school and the coach to further evaluate you while on campus. The best way to determine if a coach might ask you to commit on an unofficial visit is to evaluate how the visit was scheduled. If you have a great relationship with the coach and the coach helped schedule your visit with you, you are much more likely to be presented an offer during that visit.

No matter when or where a coach asks you to commit, always ask the coach how long the offer is on the table!

**What should you do after the visit?**

Always write a thank-you letter to the coach after your visit (either hand written or an email)! Visit the [**Guidelines for Emailing Coaches**](http://recruit-match.ncsasports.org/clientrms/pages/42) page in your RMS for more information on how to structure your thank-you letter.