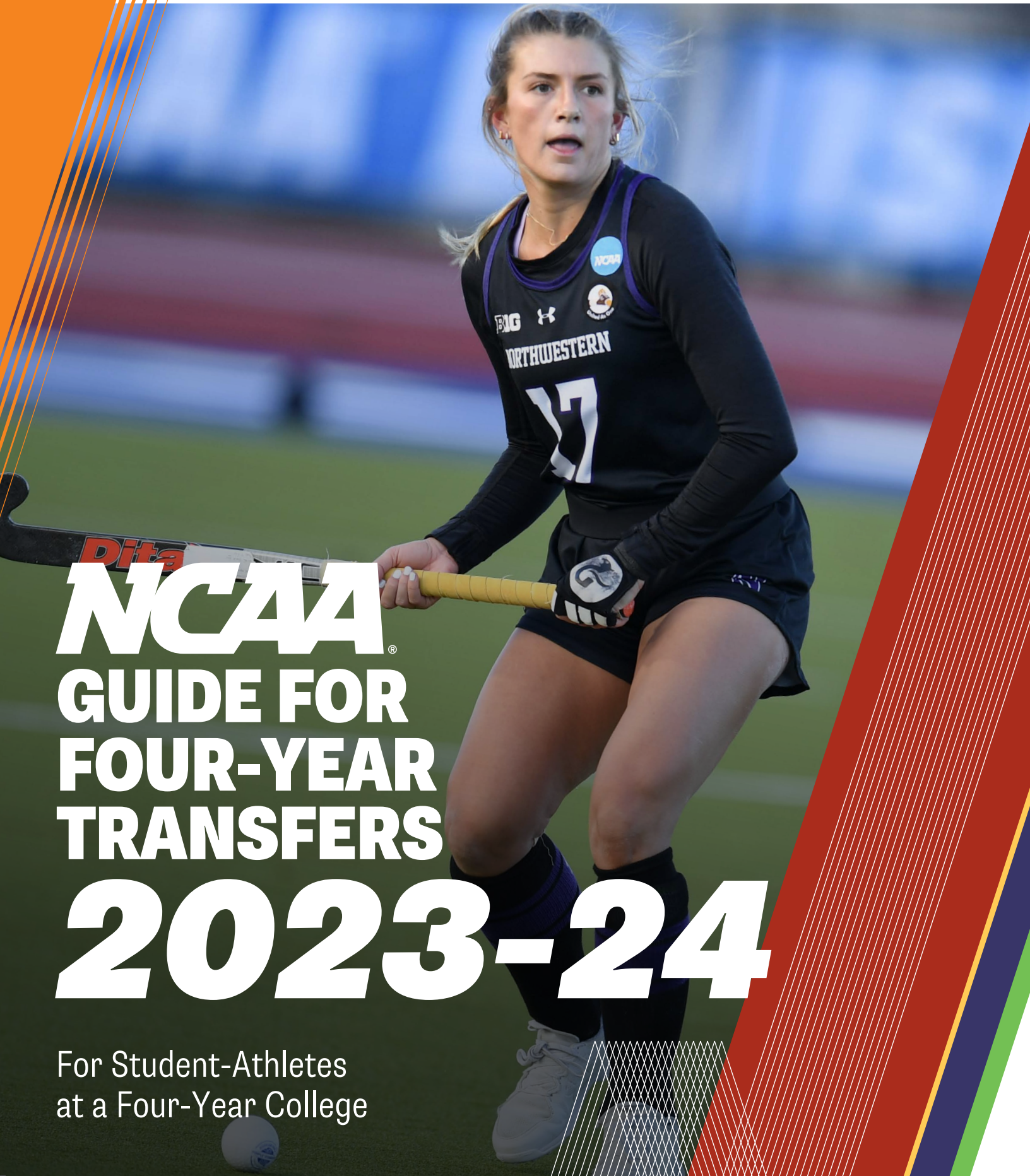




ELIGIBILITY CENTER



# NCAA<sup>®</sup> GUIDE FOR FOUR-YEAR TRANSFERS 2023-24

For Student-Athletes  
at a Four-Year College

# Inside

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ELIGIBILITY CENTER

## Information

### Visit

[eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org)

[ncaa.org/transfer](https://ncaa.org/transfer)

### Follow

Twitter [@NCAAEC](https://twitter.com/NCAAEC)

YouTube [@NCAAEC](https://www.youtube.com/@NCAAEC)

Facebook [@NCAAEC](https://www.facebook.com/NCAAEC)

Instagram [@playcollegesports](https://www.instagram.com/playcollegesports)

### Contact

NCAA legislative line:

317-917-6008, Monday-Friday

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time

International (including Quebec):

[on.ncaa.com/intlcontact](https://on.ncaa.com/intlcontact)

### Have a question about transferring?

- » Read this guide.
- » Search frequently asked questions at [ncaa.org/studentfaq](https://ncaa.org/studentfaq).
- » Visit [ncaa.org/transfer](https://ncaa.org/transfer).
- » Contact the NCAA.

### Other Resources

- » [National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics](https://www.ncaa.org/intercollegiate)
- » [NCAA Division I](https://www.ncaa.org/division-i)
- » [NCAA Division II](https://www.ncaa.org/division-ii)
- » [NCAA Division III](https://www.ncaa.org/division-iii)





## **What Should You Consider 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 a different four-year school. Students currently attending a two-year school should refer to the [Guide for Two-Year Transfers](#), available at [ncaapublications.com](http://ncaapublications.com).

# Focus on Your Degree

More than 500,000 student-athletes compete in NCAA sports, but few move on to compete at the professional or Olympic level. For the rest, the experience of college athletics and life lessons they learn along the way will help them as they pursue careers in business, education, athletics administration, communications, law, medicine and many more 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: The graduation success rate for student-athletes attending a Division I school is 89%. The academic success rate for Division II is 76%; the rate for Division III is 88%.

## Percentage of College Athletes Who Become Professional Athletes

	Men's Basketball	Women's Basketball	Football	Baseball	Men's Ice Hockey
High School Student-Athletes	540,800	399,100	1,006,000	482,700	35,300
NCAA Student-Athletes	18,800	16,500	73,700	36,000	4,300
NCAA Student-Athletes Drafted	52	31	254	791	71
*Percentage High School to NCAA	3.5%	4.1%	7.3%	7.5%	12.3%
*Percentage NCAA to Professional	1.2%	0.8%	1.6%	9.9%	7.4%

\*Percent NCAA to major professional figures are based on the number of draft picks made in the NBA, WNBA, NFL, MLB and NHL drafts.

## 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 responsibilities 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 compliance administrator, can help you successfully work through the process. Take advantage of all the information available to you.

- » Visit [ncaa.org/transfer](https://www.ncaa.org/transfer) for FAQs and resources on key topics.
- » Talk to people at your current school, including staff in the athletics department, compliance office or your academic advisor.
- » Review the applicable notification of transfer (Divisions I and II) or the permission-to-contact guidelines (Division III) on [page 10](#).
- » Call the [conference](#) of the school you are considering.
- » Call the NCAA at 317-917-6008, Monday-Friday, 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?*

## INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

*Have you registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center?*

- » To play at a Division I or II school (or at a Division III school if you are an **international student-athlete**), you must register with the Eligibility Center at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://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 [Eligibility Clock](#) for more information.

## TRANSFER ELIGIBILITY

*In some cases, student-athletes must sit out of competition for an **academic year of residence** at their new school.*

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

## NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER (DIVISIONS I AND 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 the compliance staff at your new school.
- » See [page 10](#) for more information.

## OTHER TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

*Do you meet other transfer requirements?*

- » After initiating the proper transfer protocol with your current school, you may ask the compliance staff at your new school if you meet all transfer requirements.
- » See [page 10](#) for more information.



# How Do Transfer Rules Apply to You?

**Note:** The following information 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 [Guide for Two-Year Transfers](#), available at [ncaapublications.com](http://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. Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center, if needed.
5. When comfortable, ask your current school to enter your name into the NCAA Transfer Portal (Divisions I and II) or for permission to contact (Division III).

## 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.

### How do you know if you are 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 school during a regular academic term?
2. Have you practiced (including preseason) with a college team?
3. Have you practiced or competed with a college team? This includes during any full- or part-time enrollment and includes reporting to any practice that occurred prior to the start of an academic term.
4. Have you received athletics aid from a college while attending summer school?

**If you answered “yes” to any of those questions**, you are likely a transfer student-athlete because you have met conditions that 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 the above questions**, you probably are not a transfer student-athlete and the transfer rules may not apply to you. As this is not an exhaustive list of all transfer triggers, please call the NCAA’s legislative line at 317-917-6008, Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time to discuss your eligibility status.

## CASE STUDY

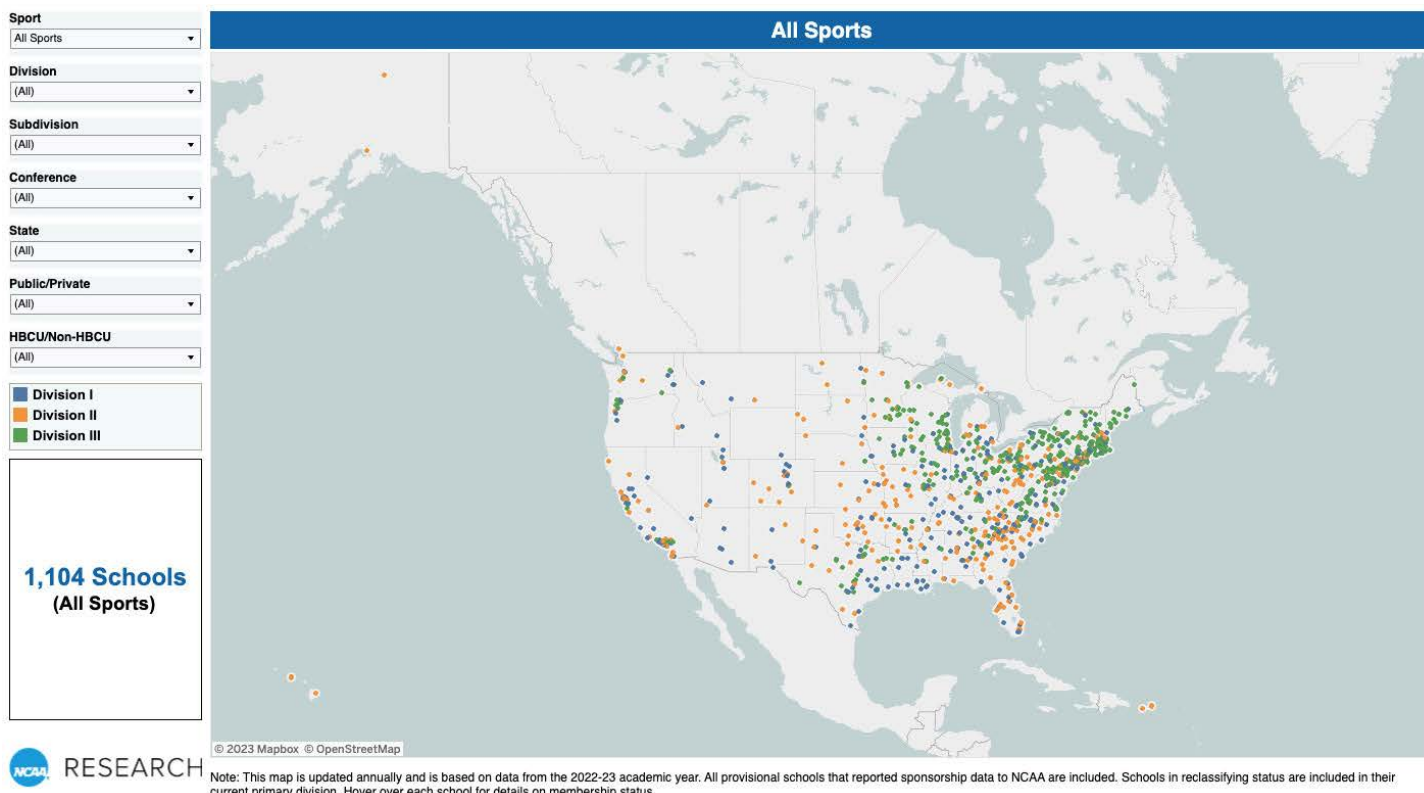
*Gary was recruited to play basketball at a NCAA Division I school. He enrolled in classes as a full-time student and attended class on the first day of the semester.*

*On the fourth day of class, Gary 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, Gary decided that he wanted to transfer to a different NCAA school.*

### Is Gary a transfer student-athlete?

Yes. The transfer rules applied to Gary the minute he became a full-time student and went to class on the first day of the semester. Gary must request notification of transfer within his **Division I sport’s transfer window** dates 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.













### 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 [on.ncaa.com/MemberMap](https://on.ncaa.com/MemberMap) for a full list of NCAA schools, sorted by division, sport and conference, including a database with contact information for each school's athletic department.
- » 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.

# Our Three Divisions

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

DIVISION	 DIVISION I	 DIVISION II <i>MAKE IT YOURS</i>	 DIVISION III <i>DISCOVER   DEVELOP   DEDICATE</i>
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS*	<b>351</b> (33%)	<b>293</b> (27%)	<b>433</b> (40%)
MEDIAN UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT	<b>8,449</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>1,655</b>
STUDENTS WHO ARE ATHLETES	<b>1 in 22</b> 	<b>1 in 9</b> 	<b>1 in 6</b> 
AVERAGE NUMBER OF TEAMS PER SCHOOL	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>
PERCENTAGE OF NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETES IN EACH DIVISION	 <b>36%</b>	 <b>25%</b>	 <b>39%</b>
ATHLETICS SCHOLARSHIPS	Multiyear, cost-of-attendance athletics scholarships available <b>58%</b> of athletes receive athletics aid	Partial athletics scholarship model <b>67%</b> of athletes receive athletics aid	No athletics scholarships <b>80%</b> of athletes receive nonathletics aid
DID YOU KNOW?	 Division I student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student body.	 Division II is the only division with schools in Alaska, Puerto Rico and Canada.	 Division III's largest school has <b>27,642</b> undergraduates. The smallest? <b>228</b> .

\*The number of schools for each division is current as of the 2022-23 academic year. This does not include reclassifying, provisional or exploratory schools. Student-athlete participation numbers include NCAA championship sports only and are current as of the 2021-22 academic year.

## 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.

## What Are the Eligibility Requirements in Each Division?

If you want to compete at an NCAA school, you must meet academic and/or amateurism standards set by NCAA members. Academic and amateurism standards are outlined in this guide and can be found on each division's page on [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org).



### 3. Understand Your Initial-Eligibility Status

Once you know if 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 you need to know your 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 your 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 if you meet 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 Eligibility Center assigned you an **initial-eligibility status**. The Eligibility Center determined your initial-eligibility status based on the NCAA-approved **core courses** you took in high school, and the grades and number of credits you earned in those courses. If you do not have an initial-eligibility status, talk to the compliance staff at your new school.

**Division III** schools set their own admissions and academic requirements. If your first college enrollment was at a Division III school, you probably were not assigned an initial-eligibility status by the Eligibility Center. However, international student-athletes (first-year enrollees and transfers) enrolling at a Division III school after Aug. 1, 2023, must be certified as an amateur by the Eligibility Center. If you are transferring to a Division III school, you need to meet the admission requirements of the school you plan to attend.

### 4. Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center, if Needed

By now you should know **if 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 Eligibility Center, you need to visit [eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org) to register before you continue the transfer process.

If you have not registered with the Eligibility Center, your **initial-eligibility status** is “nonqualifier.” Schools cannot assume you would have been a qualifier or partial qualifier. NCAA Division I and II schools will require you to create an **Academic and Amateurism Certification account** in order to certify your academic and amateurism status, if necessary. If your new NCAA school confirms an initial academic-status evaluation is not necessary to certify your transfer eligibility, creating an **Amateurism-Only Certification** account type might be right for you. Please check with the compliance office at the school you are transferring to for **which certification account** is right.



Visit [ncaa.org/student-athletes/future](https://ncaa.org/student-athletes/future) to learn more about initial-eligibility statuses.

## 5. When Comfortable, Ask Your Current School to Enter Your Name into the NCAA Transfer Portal (Divisions I and II) or for Permission to Contact (Division III)

- » Another NCAA school cannot recruit you, directly or indirectly, until you first follow the division-specific steps regarding notification of transfer (Divisions I and II) or written permission to contact (Division III).
- » You should only consider requesting notification of transfer (Divisions I and II) or written permission to contact (Division III) when you are ready to begin the process.
- » Impact to playing time, roster spot and/or athletics aid may be a result after you take steps to formally begin the transfer process, so please consider consulting with your coaching staff, compliance staff and director of athletics prior to making this decision. 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 staff 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 NCAA 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 (Divisions I and II) or written permission to contact (Division III) has been completed and your information is entered in the NCAA Transfer Portal, all applicable NCAA recruiting rules will continue to apply (e.g., tryout rules, official visit rules, recruiting calendars, etc.).

### Transferring from an NCAA Division I school

Division I recruiting rules require a student-athlete to complete the Division I educational module related to transferring (located at [ncaa.org/transfer](https://ncaa.org/transfer)) and provide written notification of transfer to their compliance office before having any direct or indirect recruiting conversations with a new NCAA school. The student-athlete's school must enter the student's name into the NCAA Transfer Portal within two business days of receipt of the student-athlete's request, provided the student-athlete has requested notification of transfer within their **Division I sport's legislated transfer window**. The NCAA Division I school you are transferring from will have written policies related to what could be impacted after you provide written notification of transfer. This will include a description of services and benefits (e.g., academic support services, access to athletics facilities, etc.) and the impact to your athletics aid agreement, which could change after you provide written notification of transfer. Division I schools are required to make these policies publicly available and accessible to student-athletes, such as in the student-athlete handbook or on the school's website.

**Note:** Being placed in the Transfer Portal does not guarantee you will be eligible to compete at the new NCAA school to which you wish to transfer. The compliance office at your new school will still need to certify your transfer and academic eligibility. A Division I student-athlete who plans to enroll as a postgraduate at another school during the next term and/or academic year may request to enter the Transfer Portal at any time.

### Transferring from an NCAA Division II school

Division II recruiting rules require a student-athlete to complete the Division II educational module related to transferring (located at [ncaa.org/transfer](https://ncaa.org/transfer)) and submit a written notification of transfer to their compliance office before having any direct or indirect recruiting contact with a new NCAA school. The student-athlete's school must enter the student's name into the NCAA Transfer Portal within seven consecutive calendar days of receipt of the student-athlete's request.

**Note:** 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 or cancel any previously signed athletics aid agreement for the following academic year. Being placed in the Transfer Portal does not indicate you are eligible to immediately compete at the new NCAA school to which you wish to transfer. The compliance office at your new school will still need to certify your transfer and academic eligibility.

### CASE STUDY

*Linda 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.*

*At the end of the academic year, Linda decided she wanted to transfer to a Division II school and join the swimming and diving team.*

**Does Linda need to provide the Division I school with a notification of transfer through its compliance office?**

Yes. Because Linda 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 III school

A Division III student-athlete must have written permission to contact before engaging in any direct or indirect recruiting with any NCAA Division I or II school. As only some Division III schools use the NCAA Transfer Portal and others will accept permission to transfer, please talk to the compliance office at the school to which you want to transfer to understand their preference. Speak to your compliance office to see what your school prefers. If the school does not grant the permission to contact within seven days, it is granted by default. If permission is denied, you may have an opportunity for a hearing. 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 Division I or II school will not provide athletically related financial assistance to the student-athlete until the student-athlete has attended the new Division I or II school for at least one academic year.

- » If you are a current Division III student-athlete wishing to contact another Division III school, download the Division III [self-release form](#). This form includes instructions on how to complete and submit the form to the new 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 Division III school to notify the current school of this recruiting activity.

### Transferring from an NAIA school

NCAA recruiting rules require any NAIA student-athlete wishing to contact an NCAA Division I or 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 Division I or 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 Division I or III school may not encourage the transfer.

For any NAIA student-athlete wishing to contact a Division II school, permission to contact is not required to begin speaking with the Division II school.

## CASE STUDY

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

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

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

No. Because Landon 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.







## When Can You Play?

Generally, you need to spend one **academic year** as a full-time student at your new school before you are eligible to compete. This time is called an academic year of residence.

### Are there any exceptions to this academic year-of-residence requirement that would allow for immediate transfer eligibility?

Yes, 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. Other rules (e.g., disciplinary suspension at the previous school, transferable credits accepted by your new school, sport-specific midyear transfer rules) may also factor into your transfer eligibility.

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

Once it is permissible for you to speak with another school ([see page 10](#)), talk to the compliance office at your new school about whether you qualify for a transfer exception. As the list of transfer exceptions varies based on specific legislation within each division, your new school will decide if you qualify.

### What happens if your compliance office determines that you do not qualify for a transfer exception?

If you do not qualify for your division-specific transfer exception based on the NCAA school or division you plan to attend, you are unable to compete during your first academic year of attendance at your new NCAA school. If you must sit out for a year at your new school, you may practice with your new team and receive an athletics scholarship if you were academically eligible when you left your previous school. To confirm, please consult with the compliance office at your new school. For an academic year of residence to count, you must attend classes only at the school where you plan to compete and 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 office at your new school to find out how many credit hours you need to take.

## CASE STUDY

*Ashley transferred to a Division I school before the beginning of the school year and is sitting out a year. She completed 12 credit hours in the fall and 12 credit hours in the spring. At her new school, students who take 12 credit hours are considered full-time students.*

### Did Ashley complete her academic year of residence?

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

# Transfer Exceptions

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 receive certification from your compliance office on campus and meet one of the following conditions:

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 not sponsored at your current school.**
4. **You are nonrecruited or nonscholarship.**
5. **You have not participated in your sport for two years.**

## 1. This Is Your First Transfer

### Planning to transfer to a Division I school?

To meet the criteria of the Division I one-time transfer exception for immediate eligibility, you must:

- » Transfer from a four-year school to an NCAA Division I school;
- » Leave your current four-year school academically eligible;
- » Have not transferred previously from another four-year school (unless at the previous four-year, you received either a nonsponsored- or **discontinued-sport transfer exception**); and
- » Certify with your new head coach that you did not have impermissible communication prior to entering the NCAA Transfer Portal.
- » *Undergraduate student-athletes:* Any undergraduate student-athlete transferring from a Division I school to a different Division I school must provide their current school with a written request to enter the NCAA Transfer Portal within the **designated transfer window(s)** for their sport.
- » *Graduate student-athletes:* Any post-baccalaureate student-athlete transferring from a Division I school to a different Division I school must provide their current school with a written request to enter the NCAA Transfer Portal by the following sport-specific date (or by the end of their final period specified in the **undergraduate sport-specific transfer windows**, whichever occurs later):
  - o Fall/winter sports: May 1.
  - o Spring sports: July 1.

For a full listing of fall/winter and spring sports, visit [ncaa.sports/sportseasons](https://www.ncaa.org/sports/sportseasons).

Other rules (e.g., disciplinary suspension at previous school; transferable credits accepted by your new school; sport-specific midyear transfer rules) may also factor into your transfer eligibility.

### Planning to transfer to a Division II school?

To meet the criteria of the Division II one-time transfer exception for immediate eligibility, you must:

- » Transfer from a four-year school to an NCAA Division II school.
- » Leave your current four-year school academically eligible.
- » Have not transferred previously from another four-year school (a student transferring from a Division I school is not required to have fulfilled the necessary percentage-of-degree requirements at the previous Division I school).
- » Certify in writing that you did not have direct or indirect communication with your new school's athletics staff prior to entering the NCAA Transfer Portal.

## CASE STUDY

*Kevin 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. Kevin then transferred to a Division II school.*

### Is Kevin eligible to play right away?

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

Students transferring from a Division II school must provide their current school with written notification of transfer by **June 15** in order to qualify for the one-time transfer exception.

Other rules (e.g., disciplinary suspension at previous school; transferable credits accepted by your new school; sport-specific midyear transfer rules) may also factor into your transfer eligibility.

## **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, then enroll at a second four-year school but return to your 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 and satisfy all progress-toward-degree requirements triggered during your previous enrollment at the first school.

## **3. Your Sport Is Dropped or 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 nonsponsored sport exception provided you never transferred from another collegiate institution that offered intercollegiate competition in your sport.

## **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 school does not provide athletically related aid in your sport and it did not recruit you, or your previous school 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 you meet ALL of the following criteria:

- » You were not recruited by your new school;
- » You have not received any athletically related financial assistance; and
- » You have not competed for any previous school or participated in any countable athletically related activities in intercollegiate athletics beyond a 14 consecutive calendar-day period at any previous school.

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

## **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.

## **CASE STUDY**

*Justin, 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. Justin is unhappy with the limited amount of playing time and wants to transfer to another Division I school.*

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

Most likely, yes. Since Justin is a qualifier, he has access to the one-time transfer exception if he ultimately transfers to another Division I school. Justin should be sure to complete the process to enter the Transfer Portal during the transfer window for men's soccer and be sure to finish the fall term academically eligible to be in the best position to qualify for this exception at another school.



## **Graduate or Post-Baccalaureate Participation**

Upon graduation (post-baccalaureate), if you still have a season of eligibility and time on your division-specific **clock** remaining to compete, you may use an exception to immediately compete provided the appropriate criteria is met:

- » If you are transferring to a Division I school, you may continue to participate (practice and compete) only if you meet the following at the time of enrollment at your new school: A) You are enrolled/enrolling full time in a graduate program, professional school, second baccalaureate or equivalent degree program; B) you have eligibility remaining; and C) you meet any legislated Division I transfer exception when transferring from a four-year school.
- » If you are transferring to a Division II school to enroll in a graduate program, professional school, second baccalaureate or equivalent degree program and 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 (Undergraduate Transfers Only)**

If you transfer from a four-year school to an NCAA Division III school, you may use an exception to immediately compete 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 immediately compete 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, and have not practiced or competed with an intercollegiate sports team for two consecutive years. (Summer school does not count toward 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 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. These standards are designed to move student-athletes toward graduation in a timely manner. As a transfer student, certification of your academic eligibility will happen once you are enrolled at your new school and includes an evaluation of your transfer credits. The compliance office 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- or four-year school. Your clock continues to tick down, even if you spend an **academic year of residence** as a result of transferring, redshirting, not attending school or enrolling part time during your college career.

If you compete at a Division II or 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- 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 attend part time without competing.

# Important NCAA Terms

**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 toward an academic year of residence.

**Certifying school:** The new school you want to attend determines if 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 school. You do not use a term if you only attend part time with no competition or are not enrolled for a term.

**Financial aid** (*commonly referred to as a “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 II school.

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

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA):**

The national governing body for over 1,100 colleges, universities, conferences and organizations.

**National Letter of Intent:** NCAA schools that are part of the NLI program may send an NLI to a college-bound 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 eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules. If you sign

an NLI, you agree to attend that school for one academic year and other schools that are part of the NLI program can no longer recruit you. For more information, visit [nationalletter.org](http://nationalletter.org). The NLI program is not administered by the NCAA.

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

**Nonqualifier:** A student-athlete planning to attend a Division I school who has not met academic requirements to be a Division I qualifier will be deemed a nonqualifier. If you are a nonqualifier, you may not practice, compete or receive an athletics scholarship from a Division I school during your first year of full-time enrollment. (Division II **does not have nonqualifiers**.)

**Notification of transfer:** An NCAA Division I or II student-athlete must request a notification of transfer through their current compliance staff 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 calendar days (Division I) or seven calendar days (Division II). Division III schools also have the option to utilize the NCAA Transfer Portal; however, please check with your Division III school to see what it prefers. To view additional notification-of-transfer information, please review [pages 10](#) and [11](#) of this guide.

**One-time transfer exception:** The most commonly utilized exception when a student-athlete is seeking immediate transfer eligibility at a future NCAA Division I or II school. To view the specific Division I and II one-time transfer criteria, please review [pages 13](#) and [14](#) of this guide.

**Partial qualifier:** Any Division II student who has not met the 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 II school, you 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 a different Division III school, you can complete a **Division III self-release** form 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.
- » Earned the required number of core-course credits in the required subject areas.
- » Earned a minimum GPA in the required subject areas.
- » For information on Division I and II initial-eligibility requirements, visit [on.ncaa.com/IE\\_Flyer](https://on.ncaa.com/IE_Flyer).

**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 NLI or a written offer of financial aid, you are considered recruited. Prospective student-athletes will also be considered as recruited if a Division I or II school initiates or arranges a telephone contact on more than one occasion for the purposes of recruitment.

**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 form** to allow another Division III school to contact you about transferring.

**Transfer exception:** A transfer exception allows you to compete during your first year at your new school. Your new school decides if you qualify for a transfer exception.

**Transfer trigger:** A condition that can affect your transfer status. A student who triggers transfer status is a student who does any of the following:

- » Has been a full-time student at a two- or four-year school during a regular academic term. (Classes taken during summer terms do not count.)

- » Practiced with a college team.
- » Practiced or competed with a college team while enrolled as a part-time student.
- » Received athletics aid from a college while attending summer school.

**Note:** This is not a complete list for Divisions I, II or III. Please consult with your NCAA school's compliance office for a complete review.

**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, Associate of Science or Associate of Applied Science degree within two years. Also referred to as "community" or "junior" colleges.

**Waiver:** An action that sets aside an NCAA rule because a specific, extraordinary circumstance prevents you from meeting the rule. Only 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.





NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. November 2023.