

Competing in College

NCAA Divisions

NCAA member schools are classified into one of three divisions based on a variety of factors. One school may be Division I in some sports while they are Division II in others. The determining factors include such things as minimum participation levels, scheduling criteria, and scholarship opportunities that are offered.

Division I (Ex. Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa)

In most sports, D-I schools must play all of their minimum number of contests against other D-I schools. Their schedules potentially include opponents from anywhere in the country. D-I schools offer the most scholarships. However, they will typically recruit nationwide or worldwide making it very difficult to obtain a scholarship.

Division II (Ex. Nebraska-Omaha, Minnesota-Mankato)

Other than football and basketball, D-II schools have no scheduling requirements. Their schedules as well as their recruits generally reflect teams and athletes from the regional area although some athletes may be brought in from other states. Although scholarships are offered, there are significant limitations on what may be offered in comparison to D-I. Many times, scholarships at this level will be divided up to be shared among a number of team members.

Division III (Ex. Gustavus, UW-LaCrosse, St. Olaf)

In D-III, the emphasis of the athletic programs is on the student-athlete and not the spectator. There are no athletic scholarships awarded in D-III schools, but they provide a great opportunity for many young men and women to pursue their athletic passions while working towards a degree. Competition and recruitment will usually be focused in the region.

NCAA Eligibility

To be eligible for entry as a student-athlete into an NCAA institution, several conditions must be met by the student during high school. If a student does not meet the listed requirements, they may not receive scholarship offers and/or would be ineligible for competition their freshman year. These requirements include taking the appropriate college preparatory classes in high school and achieving specific test score minimums and/or grade point averages. If the SAT is taken, the NCAA uses only the critical reading and math sections. If the ACT is taken, the NCAA takes a sum of the four sections (English, math, reading, and science). All SAT and ACT scores must be reported directly to the NCAA. Use the Eligibility Center code of 9999 to make sure the score is reported.

Division I Requirements

For Division I, a student must take 16 core courses and their GPA and SAT or ACT test scores must meet a standard on a sliding scale that is available on the NCAA clearinghouse web site (www.ncaaclearinghouse.net).

16 Core Course Rule

16 core courses must be successfully completed in high school to be eligible to practice, play, or receive financial aid at a D-I school. *These courses must be approved by the NCAA. You may get this list from your counselors or they are listed on the NCAA Clearinghouse web site.* From this list of courses, you must include the following in your high school coursework...

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Mathematics (Alg. I or higher)
- 2 years of Natural/Physical Science (1 year must be a lab class)
- 1 additional year of English, Math, or Science
- 2 years of Social Studies
- 4 years of additional core courses (from any area listed above, or from foreign language or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy)

Division II Requirements

For Division II, a student must take 14 core courses and achieve a minimum of 820 on the SAT or an ACT sum of 68.

14 Core Course Rule

14 core courses must be successfully completed in high school to be eligible to practice, play, or receive financial aid at a D-II school. *These courses must be approved by the NCAA. You may get this list from your counselors or they are listed on the NCAA Clearinghouse web site.* From this list of courses, you must include the following in your high school coursework...

- 3 years of English
- 2 years of Mathematics (Alg. I or higher)
- 2 years of Natural/Physical Science (1 year must be a lab class)
- 2 additional year of English, Math, or Science
- 2 years of Social Studies
- 3 years of additional core courses (from any area listed above, or from foreign language or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy)

Division III Requirements

Eligibility for D-III athletic programs is completely determined by each school. If you qualify for your chosen school academically, you will qualify to participate athletically.

What's Offered at Colleges & Universities?

Thinking about a specific sport? Do you know what colleges sponsor that sport? Do you know at which level that college participates in that sport?

To find out:

1. Go to www.ncaa.org, not ncaa.com
2. Click on SPORT from the pull down menu
3. Select the sport from the list at the bottom.
4. Search the various levels for the school in which you are interested.

NAIA

It is possible that the school for which you are looking is not included in the NCAA web site. A second organization to which some schools belong is the NAIA or National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. To find out if the school for which you are searching is a member of the NAIA, go to www.NAIA.org. On the home page, click on the listing of NAIA conferences and schools. From there you can search for your school.

NCAA Clearinghouse

Near the end of your junior year, if you are hoping to participate in D-I or D-II, you must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is an organization that will review your coursework and determine whether you meet the minimum eligibility requirements. This should be done during the junior year to determine if there are any deficiencies in classes. This way, corrections can still be made during the senior year. If you do not register with the clearinghouse, you cannot be eligible in a D-I or D-II institution during your freshman year.

To register with the NCAA Clearinghouse, you must:

- Go to the clearinghouse web site at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
- Download the Student Release Form
- Send the completed form to the clearinghouse along with a check for the listed amount..

If you have any further questions, please contact the Activities Office at the high school.