

YOUR FUTURE STARTS NOW

Decoding NCAA & NAIA Eligibility

Why This Matters

”

No eligibility = No athletic
scholarship, regardless of how
great you are.

”

— The Reality of College
Sports

Pillar 1: The Two Big Players–NCAA & NAIA



NCAA D1/D2

Largest universities, athletic scholarships available. Strict academic rules (16 core courses).



NCAA D3

Focus on "student-athlete." No athletic scholarships, but academic aid. Institution-based rules.



NAIA

Over 250 schools, scholarships available. Flexible academic rules.



Registration

Both the NCAA and NAIA have their *own* eligibility centers. You must register!

Pillar 2: NCAA Requirement– The 16 Core Courses

Subject	DI Requirement	DII Requirement
English	4 years	3 years
Math (Algebra I or higher)	3 years	2 years
Natural/Physical Science	2 years	2 years
Additional English/Math/Sci	1 year	3 years
Social Science	2 years	2 years
Additional Academic Courses	4 years	4 years

Note: NAIA does not have a 16 core course requirement. They look at your cumulative GPA.

NCAA D1 'Gotcha': The 10/7 Rule

- ✔ **Approved Courses Only:** These **MUST** be from your school's official NCAA-approved course list. (Ask your counselor!)
- ⚠ **The 10/7 Rule:** By the start of your 7th semester (Senior Year), 10 of your 16 core courses must be complete.
- 🔒 **LOCKED IN:** 7 of those 10 (in English, Math, or Science) are **LOCKED** and cannot be retaken for a better GPA. This is the #1 mistake!

Academic Requirements: NCAA vs. NAIA

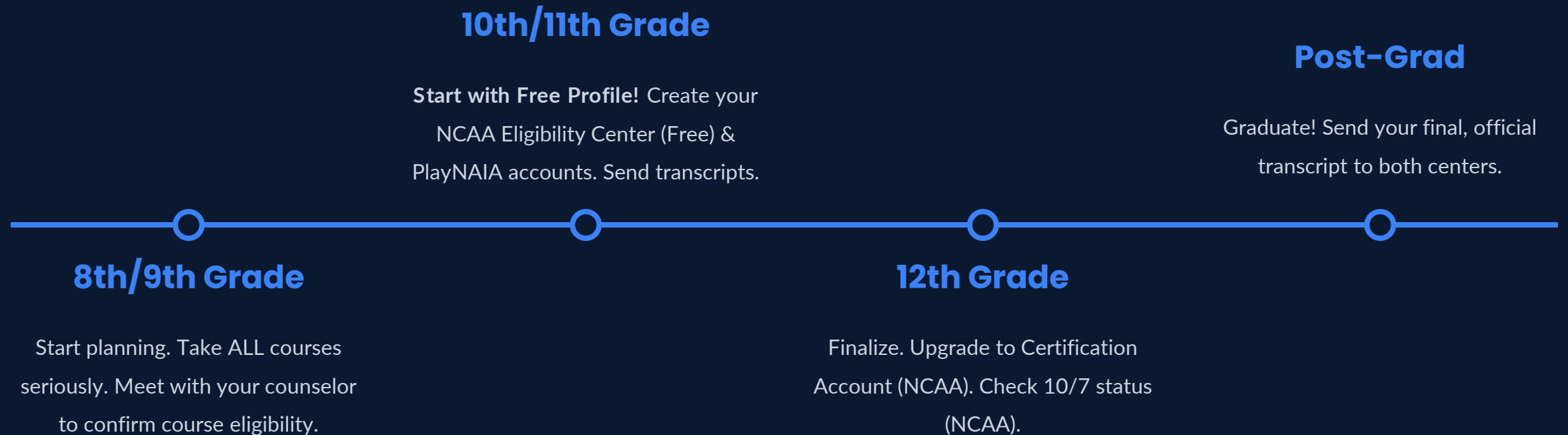
NCAA (D1/D2)

- » D1 GPA: 2.3 in 16 Core Courses
- » D2 GPA: 2.2 in 16 Core Courses
- » Test Scores: SAT/ACT scores are **NOT** required for NCAA eligibility.

NAIA (Meet 1 of 2)

- » 1. Instant Qualifier: 2.3+ Cumulative GPA
- OR**
- » 2. Meet 2 of 3:
 - » 2.0 Cumulative GPA
 - » Top 50% of Class Rank
 - » 18 ACT or 970 SAT
(Use Code: **9876**)

Registration & Eligibility Timeline



The Registration Centers & Fees

NCAA Registration

Register at <https://web3.ncaa.org/>

- 1. Free Profile Account:** Recommended starting point. Allows communication, unofficial transcripts, and receiving NCAA ID.
- 2. Certification Account:** Required to compete. Fee is approx. \$100 (domestic). Fee waivers are available.

A(NAIA)

Register at <https://play.mynaia.org/>.

Fee is approx. \$110 (domestic). Fee waivers are also available. Use code **9876** to send ACT/SAT scores.



Pillar 3: What Recruiting Looks Like



Initial Contact (8th/9th)

Coaches send ****emails, questionnaires, or recruiting materials****. This means they are interested in you. ****This is not an offer.****



Phone Calls & Texts

NCAA rules dictate when coaches can call/text you directly. For many sports, this starts ****September 1st of Junior Year****.



Campus Visits

Unofficial Visit: You pay. Unlimited. **Official Visit:** School pays for transport/lodging. Limited to 5 total (DII) or ****Unlimited (DI)****.



The Offer & Signing

A coach offers a scholarship/spot. You accept by signing the ****National Letter of Intent (NLI)****, which binds you to the school.

Pillar 4: CRITICAL DIFFERENCE– Eligibility vs. Admission

Initial Eligibility

This is the permission to **play** college sports.

- » **Who Decides:** The NCAA or NAIA Eligibility Center.
- » **Requirements Focus:** Strict Core Course GPA, 10/7 rule (NCAA), and Amateurism status.
- » **Outcome:** Qualifier, Academic Redshirt, or Nonqualifier.
- » **Key Point:** You can be **admitted** to the school but still be **ineligible** to play.

College Admission

This is the permission to **attend** the university.

- » **Who Decides:** The University's Admissions Office.
- » **Requirements Focus:** Cumulative GPA, standardized test scores (if required), application, essays, and class rank.
- » **Outcome:** Accepted or Rejected.
- » **Key Point:** You can be **eligible** to play but still be **rejected** by the school's admissions office.

Pillar 5: Amateurism (NCAA & NAIA)

Both organizations require you to be an amateur. They take this VERY seriously.



NO Pay: You cannot accept money, gifts, or the "promise of pay" for playing your sport.



NO Agents: You cannot agree (verbally or in writing) to be represented by an agent or advisor.



NO Extra Benefits: You cannot accept special benefits like free travel, lodging, or gear from a college booster.

Action Plan: 8th & 9th Grade

Start Early

- Understand recruiting starts now. Coaches may contact club/high school staff.
- Meet with your counselor and confirm your path to the NCAA Core Course list.
- Start building your ****Core Course GPA (NCAA)**** from day one.
- Ensure all math classes are ****Algebra I or higher**** to count as core courses.
- Remember your ****Cumulative GPA**** matters for NAIA!



Action Plan: 10th – 12th Grade

The Final Push

- ****10th Grade:**** Take the PSAT. Plan when to take the SAT/ACT.
- ****11th Grade:**** Register with the NCAA (Certification Account needed for D1/D2) & PlayNAIA. Send official transcripts.
- Plan to take the SAT/ACT. (Send scores with code ****9876**** for NAIA).
- ****12th Grade (Senior):**** Confirm the coach placed you on the ****Institutional Request List (IRL)**** (NCAA DI/DII).
- Ensure you meet the ****10/7 Rule**** by the start of the 7th semester (NCAA D1).
- Send your final, official transcript after graduation.



Pillar 6: Certification Outcomes (What You Get)

NCAA Outcomes (DI/DII)

This result determines your immediate standing at the college level:

- ✓ **Qualifier:** Fully eligible to receive an athletic scholarship, practice, and compete in the first year.
(The desired result!)
- ⏸ **Academic Redshirt:** Eligible for athletic scholarship and practice, but ****cannot**** compete in the first year.
(D1 only, if core courses/GPA are insufficient.)
- ✗ **Nonqualifier:** Ineligible to receive athletic aid, practice, or compete in the first year. You lose a year of eligibility.

NAIA Outcomes

The NAIA's process is more straightforward based on their three-part criteria:

- ✓ **Eligible:** Meets one of the required criteria (2.3+ GPA OR 2 of 3 rules). You can accept aid and compete immediately.
- ✗ **Ineligible:** Did not meet any of the required criteria. You cannot accept athletic aid or compete.
- » *NAIA has a stronger focus on the overall cumulative GPA and can be more flexible for transfers.*

Questions?

Your #1 Resource: Your High School Counselor

ncaaeligibilitycenter.org | PlayNAIA.org

Image Sources



<https://usport.ai/images/optimized/all/cover-image-ncaa-naia.webp>

Source: usport.ai



<https://bassathletics.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/bts4.jpg>

Source: bassathletics.com



<https://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/BHS-Signing-Ceremony-Nov-2013.jpg>

Source: www.berkeleyschools.net



https://static.vecteezy.com/system/resources/previews/068/529/307/non_2x/an-empty-football-stadium-at-night-illuminated-by-bright-lights-free-photo.jpg

Source: www.vecteezy.com