

# WHITE PAPER

## National Collegiate Athletic Association Nontraditional Program Approval Guide



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## National Collegiate Athletic Association

### Background

The NCAA, or National Collegiate Athletic Association, was established in 1906 and serves as the athletics governing body for more than 1,200 colleges, universities, conferences and organizations. The national office is in Indianapolis, Indiana, however the member colleges and universities develop the rules and guidelines for athletics eligibility and athletics competition for each of the three NCAA divisions. The NCAA is committed to the student athlete and to governing competition in a fair, safe, inclusive and sportsmanlike manner.

The NCAA membership includes:

- 340 active Division I members
- 290 active Division II members
- 436 active Division III members

One of the differences among the three divisions is that colleges and universities in Divisions I and II may offer athletics scholarships, while Division III colleges and universities do not.

Collegiate athletics can be a great opportunity for select students. If you have students considering participating in a NCAA college level sport, there are specific eligibility requirements to be aware of and it is best for both you and the student to start planning early. This resource was created to guide you through the process of preparing your nontraditional program for approval.

### Preparing your Students for Eligibility

First, it is important to familiarize your school, your students and their parents with the eligibility standards. Visit [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) for detailed information. Additionally, those students interested in eligibility should consider coordinating the following tools and information:

- **Valid Email Address.** Obtain a valid email address that can be check regularly for any possible updates that the NCAA Eligibility Center might send.
- **Basic Personal Information.** This includes information such as name, gender, date of birth, contact information and a list of any other countries in which the student has lived.
- **Basic Education History.** This includes a list of all high schools or secondary schools the student has attended and the dates during which they attended them.
- **Additional Coursework.** This includes details pertaining to any coursework the student may have taken in addition to traditional high school or secondary school education (e.g., courses taken to improve a grade, summer school courses taken at a location other than your high school or secondary school, courses taken at a college or junior college, or any type of correspondence or internet courses).

- **Sports Participation History.** This includes details for any teams with which the student has practiced or played or certain events in which they may have participated, as well as information about any individuals that have advised the student or marketed their skills in a particular sport.
- **Payment.** The registration fee is \$70 for U.S., U.S. Territories and Canadian students (U.S. Territories include American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands); and \$120 for all other international students. The NCAA Eligibility Center accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express. If the student is a U.S. resident, they can choose to pay by electronic check. Some individuals may qualify to apply for a fee waiver.

## Nontraditional Courses

### What are Nontraditional Courses?

Nontraditional courses are those taught through the Internet (online or virtual), distance learning, independent study, individualized instruction, correspondence, computer software programs or other similar means.

There are many types of nontraditional educational programs available to high school students. When considering an online, distance learning, correspondence or even a credit recovery program, there are several things to consider. However, the following themes should be kept in mind:

- All nontraditional courses must include ongoing access between the instructor and student, as well as regular interaction for purposes of teaching, evaluating and providing assistance. This may include, for example, exchanging of emails between the student and teacher, online chats, phone calls, feedback on assignments, and the opportunity for the teacher to engage the student in individual instruction. **Through our experiences, Edmentum has learned that the NCAA suggests 49-51% teacher student interaction and this should be recorded and monitored in a variety of manners.**
- All nontraditional courses must have a defined time period for completion. For example, it should be clear whether the course is meant to be taken for an entire semester or during a more condensed time period, such as six weeks, etc.
- Nontraditional courses should be clearly identified as such on the high school transcript.
- NCAA rules require that all core courses are academic four year college preparatory courses. Also, courses that are taught through distance learning, online, credit recovery, etc. need to be comparable in length, content and rigor to courses taught in a traditional classroom setting. The program process is the key feature to keep in mind Edmentum simply provides the program content.
- Best practice is to put the focus on your program and not on the content when filling out the questionnaire.

## Time Line Guide for Students

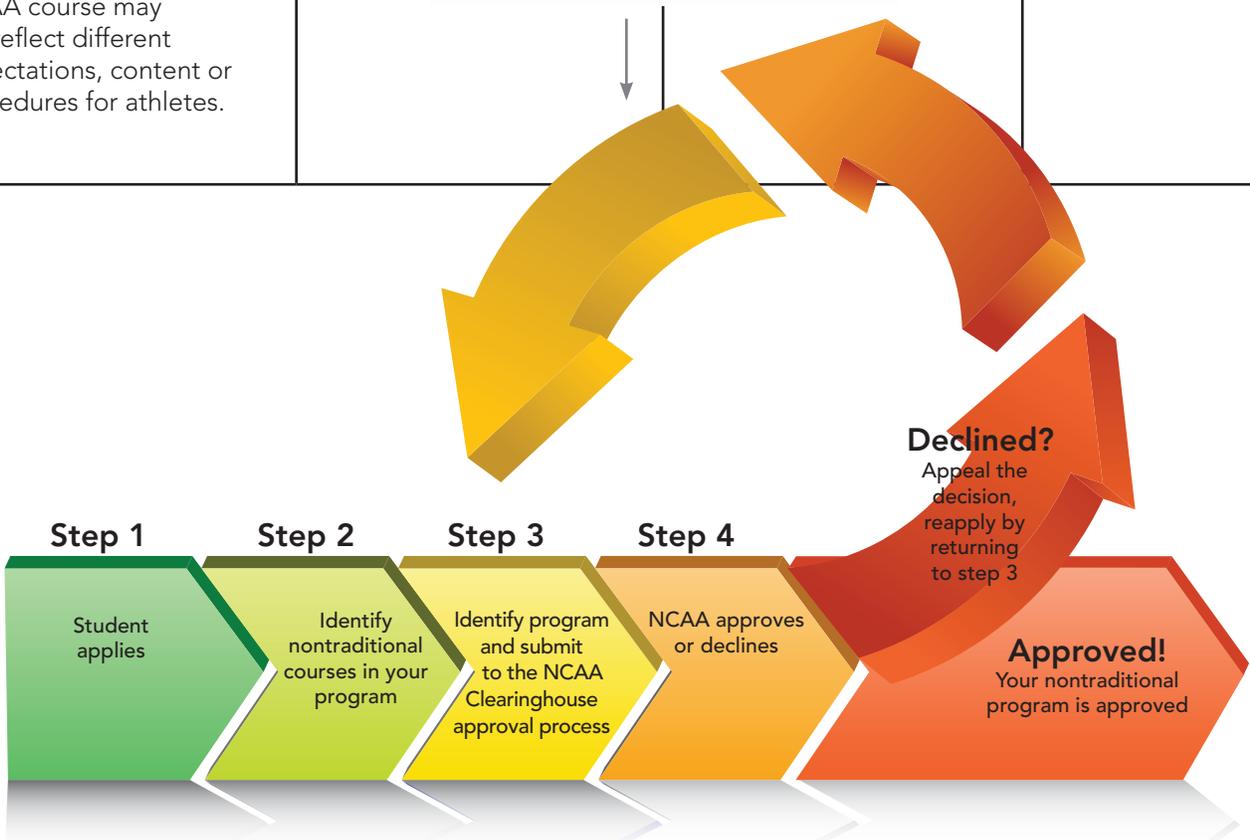
If a student wishes to participate in NCAA Division I or II athletics, they need to be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. They are also required to qualify academically and be cleared as an amateur student-athlete and are responsible for achieving and protecting their eligibility status.

Year 1 (freshman)	Year 2 (sophomore)	Year 3 (junior)	Year 4 (senior)
<p>Student to register at the beginning of their sophomore year at <a href="http://www.eligibilitycenter.org">www.eligibilitycenter.org</a>.</p> <p>Student must check with their high school counselor to ensure they are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p> <p>Access and complete NCAA checklist</p>	<p>Student to ask their district to send their transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center at the end of their junior year.</p> <p>Student must check with their high school counselor to ensure they are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division I GPA required to be eligible for competition on or after August 1, 2016, is 2.300.</li> <li>• Division I GPA required to receive athletics aid and practice on or after August 1, 2016, is 2.000.</li> <li>• The Division II core GPA requirement is a minimum of 2.000.</li> </ul>	<p>Student must take the ACT or SAT and use the code "9999" to have their official scores sent directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center.</p> <p>Student must check with their high school counselor to ensure they are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p>	<p>Student must request final amateurism certification during their senior year (beginning April 1).</p> <p>Student must ask their high school counselor to submit their final transcript with proof of graduation.</p>

## Timeline Guide for Schools and Districts

Year 1 (freshman)	Year 2 (sophomore)	Year 3 (junior)	Year 4 (senior)
<p>Identify those students that may be in line for eligibility and get them to register as soon as possible, the longer a student waits the less time the application has to get approved</p> <p>Counselors are to ensure students are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p> <p>NCAA course may not reflect different expectations, content or procedures for athletes.</p>	<p>Send students' transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center at the end of their junior year.</p> <p>Counselors are to ensure students are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p>	<p>Counselors are to ensure students are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p>	<p>Counselors are to ensure students are on track to graduate on time with their class and have the required amount of core courses.</p> <p>Counselors are to submit the student's final transcript with proof of graduation.</p>

NCAA application is received and completed



## Guidance for Schools

Edmentum credit-granting customers must demonstrate that a student has completed a full course, including all requisite components, for consideration by NCAA for eligibility requirements. In other words, you must demonstrate that the blended or online courses submitted per NCAA requirements meet the full breadth and depth of content and structure of an equivalent classroom instructed course. The NCAA focuses on two important questions:

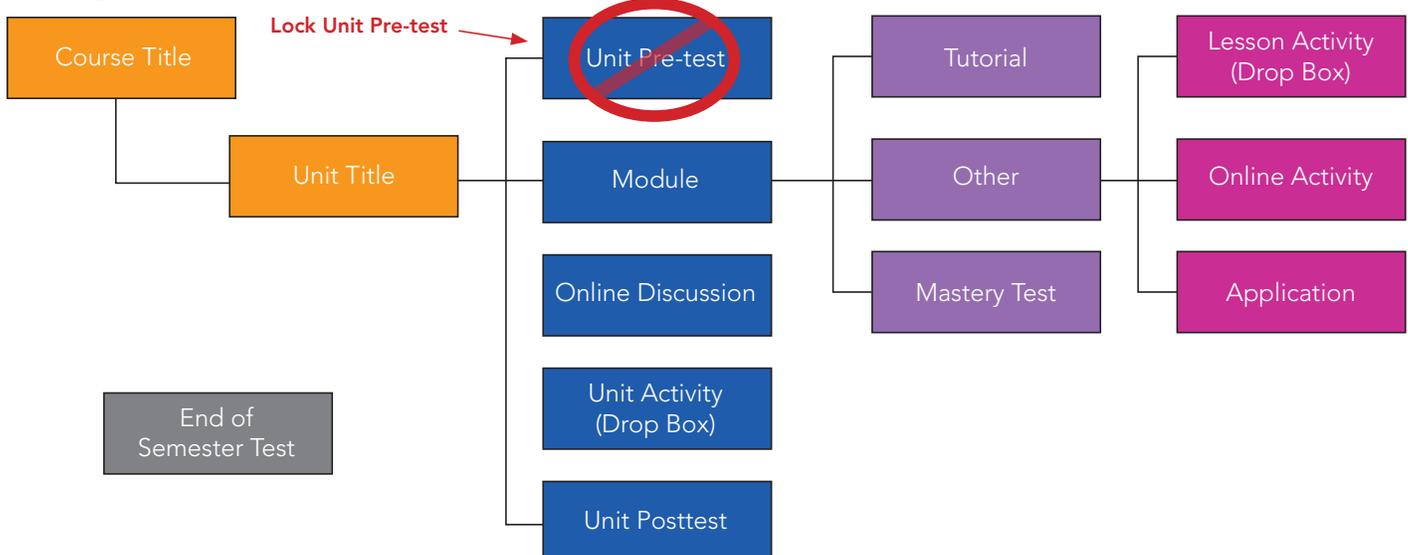
1) **How is the course designed?** The NCAA legislation requires that all courses, whether online, blended or classroom instructed, must meet the same criteria for rigor, depth of content and structure, including demonstration of competencies. Edmentum resources to be shared to show depth, breadth and rigor include:

- a) Support Site (Teacher Resources)
  - i) Courseware Map
  - ii) Related Resources and Extensions (when available)
  - iii) Courseware Literature Selections (English only)
  - iv) Course Project (Electives only)
  - v) Teacher Guide (includes: Scope and Sequence, Courses Overview, Courses Components, and more)

2) **How is the program implemented?** The NCAA requires that an eligible course must be completed in its entirety. In some instances, a credit recovery course may not meet this threshold if it only addresses specific modules or components that were not completed during a previous same-course enrollment period. Edmentum resources and recommendations to be shared for accountability:

- a) The Learner Progress by Learner Report monitors a single learner’s progress, status, and scores on activities across all assignments. This report answers the questions “How well is a single student progressing through their assignments from all classes” and “Do they understand the material in those assignments?”
- b) As you begin your program, set up a system to hold on to all coursework and related materials that can be provided to NCAA should evidence of full completion need to be provided.
- c) Leverage the communication features in the platform, including the threaded discussion board, email, messages, and the digital drop box to allow students to interact for the purpose of instruction.
- d) If you know that students will be using an Edmentum course through our Plato Courseware or EdOptions Academy product lines for NCAA eligibility, you should not allow those students to exempt out of modules. Per NCAA documentation: “if a student is permitted to test out of portions of a repeated course, is exempted from certain modules, or is allowed to finish the course in an abbreviated timeframe, such a course would not be acceptable for NCAA use. Courses like these may meet high school graduation requirements; however, they would not meet NCAA legislated standards.”

This diagram illustrates the basis of the curriculum model.



## What makes a nontraditional classroom successful?

### Best Practices:

- The instructor and the student have ongoing access to one another for purposes of teaching, evaluating and providing assistance to the student throughout the duration of the course.
- The instructor and the student have regular interaction with one another for purposes of teaching, evaluating and providing assistance to the student throughout the duration of the course.
- The student's work (e.g., exams, papers, assignments) is made available for evaluation and validation.
- Evaluation of the student's work is conducted by the appropriate academic authorities in accordance with the high school's established academic policies.
- The course includes a defined time period for completion.
- The course is acceptable for any student and is placed on the high school transcript.

The idea of NCAA is that every student whether eligible for scholarship or not, whether in a traditional or non-traditional program, is ready for college level courses. The program must be demanding, college preparatory and include teacher involvement. The content is secondary to the program, content must meet certain criteria in rigor, but the program itself must maintain a high level of quality, equal for ALL students, both applying for NCAA consideration and not.

## A Note on Credit Recovery Courses

Many high schools offer credit recovery or credit retrieval programs for students to receive credit for a course they previously failed. Some students take credit recovery to improve grades for courses they took previously. If your high school offers credit recovery, students need to make sure the following conditions are met:

- The credit recovery course must meet the NCAA legislated definition of a core course (including the new nontraditional definition). This means that there must be required access and interaction between the student and the teacher for the purposes of teaching, evaluating and providing assistance. There must also be a defined time period for completion of the course.
- The credit recovery course must be comparable to the regular course in length, content and rigor. There are many examples in which the course the student failed was a rigorous, college preparatory course, and the credit recovery course is taught at a lower level and lacks adequate rigor.
- The school must follow its credit recovery policies, whether the student is an athlete or not. The NCAA Eligibility Center may request the policy if necessary.
- The credit recovery course should be clearly identified as such on the high school transcript.

## Eligibility Requirements

### Core Courses

- NCAA Division I currently requires 16 core courses. NCAA Division II will require 16 core courses for students enrolling on or after August 1, 2013.
- Beginning August 1, 2016, NCAA Division I will require 10 core courses to be completed prior to the seventh semester (seven of the 10 core courses must be a combination of English, math or natural or physical science that meet the distribution requirements to the right). These 10 courses become “locked in” at the seventh semester and cannot be retaken for grade improvement.
- Beginning August 1, 2016, it will be possible for a Division I college-bound student-athlete to still receive athletics aid and the ability to practice with the team if he or she fails to meet the 10 course requirement. However, the student-athlete would not be able to compete.

### Test Scores

- Division I uses a sliding scale to match test scores and core grade-point averages (GPA).
- Division II requires a minimum SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.
- The SAT score used for NCAA purposes includes only the critical reading and math sections. The writing section of the SAT is not used.
- The ACT score used for NCAA purposes is a sum of the following four sections: English, mathematics, reading and science.

To view the Division I Sliding Scale, visit [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) and enter as an NCAA College-Bound Student-Athlete. Next, select “Resources,” next select “U.S. Students” and finally select “Eligibility Quick Reference Sheet”.

*When you register for the SAT or ACT, use the NCAA Eligibility Center code of 9999 to ensure all SAT and ACT scores are reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Test scores that appear on transcripts will not be used.*

### Grade-Point Average

- Only courses that appear on your high school's list of NCAA courses will be used in the calculation of your core GPA.
- Currently, Division I uses a Sliding Scale to match test scores and core GPAs. The Sliding Scale can be found on page No. 10 of the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete found at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).
- Division I GPA required to be eligible for competition on or after August 1, 2016, is 2.300.
- Division I GPA required to receive athletics aid and practice on or after August 1, 2016, is 2.000.
- The Division II core GPA requirement is a minimum of 2.000.

**Resources & Links**

- NCAA Eligibility Center Resources  
The main source for schools looking to understand the NCAA Certification Process  
<https://web1.ncaa.org/hportal/exec/links?linksSubmit=ShowActiveLinks>
- NCAA Guidelines for Credit Recovery  
[http://web1.ncaa.org/web\\_files/eligibility\\_center/CoreCourseInfo/CreditRecovery.pdf](http://web1.ncaa.org/web_files/eligibility_center/CoreCourseInfo/CreditRecovery.pdf)  
[http://web1.ncaa.org/web\\_files/eligibility\\_center/OVN/Credit\\_RecoveryandRetrievalSoftware.pdf](http://web1.ncaa.org/web_files/eligibility_center/OVN/Credit_RecoveryandRetrievalSoftware.pdf)
- NCAA Quick Reference Guide  
[http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Quick\\_Reference\\_Sheet.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Quick_Reference_Sheet.pdf)
- Eligibility Checklist  
<http://www.ncaapublications.com/DownloadPublication.aspx?download=EB13.pdf>

