



Navigating the pathway to achieve your college athletic dreams in the United States (U.S.) can be both exciting and stressful. Student-athletes must participate in a lengthy, highly regulated and competitive recruitment process to be considered for a sports scholarship. EducationUSA Australia is here to assist you in understanding the process.

While playing for a college team on scholarship can pay for the cost of your undergraduate degree, you do not attend university solely to play sport. Student-athlete applicants should recognize that the order of those two words is crucial—you are first and foremost a student. Being an athlete is important; however, this is secondary to your successful completion of an undergraduate degree.

Many student-athletes in Australia aspire to attend an NCAA Division I college. Thus, the information provided in the college sports section will focus on supporting students and families to achieve this outcome. However, the information can be transferable to support anyone who aspires to play U.S. college competitive sport. This guide outlines some clearly defined steps to help families successfully navigate the process.

Steps

1. Identify your preferred athletic association: NCAA, NAIA or NJCAA
2. Register with the appropriate associations governing body e.g. Eligibility Center
3. Plan your studies so that you meet the academic entry requirements, which is best from Year 9 and onwards i.e. NCAA 16 core courses
4. Map out your standardized testing calendar if required - then register as soon as possible
5. Identify suitable universities and athletic programs
6. Develop your sport profile
7. Capture competitive athletic footage to be sent to coaches. Best to link from a website so that you do not fill a coaches inbox
8. Arrange for your school to send annual transcripts to the required eligibility center i.e. NCAA from Year 9 onwards
9. Contact coaches - best to start in Year 11
10. Record responses, follow-up, and identify suitable programs
11. Send standardized test scores to the NCAA (code 9999) or the NAIA (code 9876)
12. Promote yourself by creating your online profile that can include using free online recruitment sites
13. Stay on track using a timeline like the [NCAA Division I timeline](#) or create your own

NOTE: This information was accurate at time of print (January 1, 2019) and is subject to change.



Colleges and universities govern college sports and set rules regarding scholarships and athletic recruitment. There are a number of associations that colleges or universities can join:

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

[The NCAA](#) is a non-profit organization whose members include more than 1,200 universities and colleges in the United States. It administers 23 sports and enforces the rules which are made by its member institutions. There are three Divisions: I, II and III. Division I is the most competitive so the athletics standards are high and the level of competition is intense; only students at the very highest standard of athletic ability tend to be recruited. Athletic scholarships are available for sports in Division I and II only.

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

[The NAIA](#) is a governing body of small athletics programs that are dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics. There are around 250 colleges and universities that make up the NAIA, offering excellent sport programs. They do offer some sports scholarships.

Helpful links

[PlayNAIA](#)

[To register](#)

[NAIA vs NCAA](#)

[Getting started with the Eligibility Center as an International Student](#)

[NAIA Guide for the International Student-Athlete](#)

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

[The NJCAA](#) is the association for Community Colleges and Junior Colleges dedicated to promoting a national program of athletic participation in two-year institutions. The NJCAA does not have an eligibility clock or age limit.

Helpful links

[Eligibility](#)

[Guide for Prospective Student-Athletes](#)

[NJCAA Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Eligibility](#)



Questions to ask yourself

These questions will help you evaluate your athletic and academic skills to identify which colleges and athletic association you'll be best suited to:

1. Will you meet the academic rigors of your preferred institutions?
2. How does your talent, times, results etc. match up against the achievements of the team rosters?
3. Does the college offer academic programs that interest you?
4. What SAT or ACT scores are expected or were accepted in the last intake?
5. Will you meet the eligibility criteria?
6. What is the university's reputation for your preferred major?

Registering

Once you've identified which association is the best fit for your sporting ability, the next step is to register your details that may include paying a fee. It is never too early to begin the process and register. This ensures that you receive appropriate and timely advice.





The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

All student-athletes wishing to compete in the NCAA Division I or II must have their academic and amateurism credentials certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center.

The criteria taken into account include your standardized test scores, your 16 core subjects and the grades earned in those core courses. Education USA provides some information to help you understand these elements, but you should refer to the resources and content on the NCAA website as your main point of reference.

If your goal is to participate in a NCAA sporting program at a Division I or II college, you need to register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) as soon as possible.

Registering

As a prospective student-athlete (psa) you have two options:

- 1. Set up a free profile page.** If you're not sure you want to proceed down this path then you can set up a free [profile page](#) that allows the NCAA to provide you with further timely information. Please allow 15 -30 minutes to completely register.
- 2. Create a certification account.** If you are sure you want to be recruited in a NCAA Division I or II program and you are being actively recruited by NCAA coaches then you are best to set up a [certification account](#) by paying the US\$150* fee. This allows you to begin building your file and sending through your yearly transcripts from year 9 and onwards. Please allow 30-45 minutes to completely register if you have not already set up a profile page.

* US \$150 fee - correct at time of print - may be subject to change

Helpful links

[Where to register](#)

[Which eligibility account should I create](#)

[How to register](#)

[Registration checklist](#)





To be well placed and competitive at U.S. colleges, Australian students should make sure they create a positive reputation and player profile that can be shared with U.S. coaches, while staying on top of the time lines that are offered as a guide below:

Years 9 and 10

- Ensure your subject choices meet the relevant association's academic requirements
- Begin research into colleges, athletic programs and coaches that might be a good fit
- Connect with [EducationUSA](#) on Facebook and get involved in some of our scheduled sessions
- Consider registering with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) and starting with a free profile account

Year 11

- Register with athletic associations, if you have not done so already
- Create your sport profile
- Build a list of up to 50 college programs worth considering
- Begin contacting coaches
- Plan your SAT or ACT testing schedule and register for tests as soon as possible
- Consider paying U.S. \$150 to transfer your profile account to a certification account
- At the end of year 11 if you meet the criteria and you are actively being recruited by U.S. colleges, consider requesting that the NCAA review you as an early qualifier.

Year 12

- Maintain contact with coaches—update them on any recent highlights and awards
- Re-take the SAT or ACT if you need to improve your scores
- Identify your college application deadlines
- Admissions applications open on August 1
- At the end of year 12 you and your school must provide 1) your final transcript as supplied by your respective Department of Education and 2) your proof of graduation, 'Completion Certificate'

Academic transcripts

You can organize to have your transcripts from Years 9–12 sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center. ONLY schools can provide your transcripts and this can now be achieved via email. The email address is ec-processing@ncaa.org. Please ensure that your school ensures that your full name and NCAA ID number is included in the subject line.

Note: It is best to have your school(s) send your grades (academic transcript) after each year of high school completed (end of years 9, 10, 11, 12)

Helpful link:

[Submitting documents to the NCAA](#)



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Core course requirements

To be eligible to play in Division I, the NCAA requires the completion of 16 core courses in Years 9-12:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of maths
- 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your school)
- 1 extra year of English, maths or natural or physical science
- 2 years of social science
- 4 years of extra core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy)

Some Australian subjects not recognized as NCAA core courses

Information technology, maths A, physical education, health and human movement, business studies, accounting, graphics, performing/visual arts/drama/music, technology, English as a second language (ESL) and VET courses.

Note: For a definitive list of approved and denied core courses refer to the *NCAA 2018-2019 Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility*

Calculating your core courses

The NCAA Eligibility Center cannot review your 16 core courses until the end of Year 12 when they have all official transcripts from Years 9–12 on record. It is important you keep track of your own continuing eligibility throughout high school.

- Refer to the [worksheets](#) on pages 20 and 24 of the [2018-19 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#)

Tips

- If semesters - a single semester class will be recognized as .50 credit; a full year (two semester) class will be 1.0 credit
- If terms - normally 4 terms make up 1 year. E.g. 1 term = .25, 2 terms = .5
- You can find a handy transcript template on this USB to help you keep track of your core courses. This can also help you provide a pre-graduation academic transcript to college coaches who request this.

Helpful links

NCAA [Core Courses](#)

[NCAA 2018-19 Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#)

Note: The *NCAA 2018-19 Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility* is updated online every quarter.



This information is provided as a guide only—please review and develop a sports profile that best reflects you. You should have this completed by the start of Year 11.

Your sport profile is best not to exceed two pages and could include the following:

- Link to video footage of whole games/competition—**not** just a highlight video. Coaches want to see how you respond, your body language, etc. rather than just examples of you at your best.
- One page reference from your current coach. Good to include their contact details (email and telephone)

Your sport profile could include:

Personal Details

- Name
- Sport and position
- Level of competition - representative, state, national
- Weight and height if important for your sport
- Eligibility ID number
- SAT/ACT score or projected test date/s
- Projected U.S. college start date
- Contact details of current Australian coach (email and telephone if they are happy to talk of your abilities etc.)
- Link to footage

Sporting Achievements

- Times, results or statistics that profiles your talents (e.g. ERG results for rowers)
- Awards and achievements

Personal Message

- Personal goals
- What you can give to their program
- Why do you want to join this team and attend this college

Optional

- An additional one page summary of your grades from Years 9-12 (or the year(s) you have completed). This can be useful information for U.S. coaches interested in recruiting you before you can share standardized test results (SAT or ACT). A template is provided in the Appendix.



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Promoting yourself to coaches

In addition to contacting college coaches directly, you may wish to promote your sporting talent to college coaches through online recruitment sites.

Often these online recruitment sites offer full access for free; however, some can have a small fee to access some or all of their services. You should evaluate the potential benefits and outcomes you may receive to determine if these sites present good value for your needs.

Recruitment sites allow you to create a professional profile and to upload photos and game footage. Alternatively you can create your own website. A great example with some good tips for you to review is an Australian who recently graduated from both Stanford University and Duke University - [Steven Solomon](#).





So you have completed your sport profile; you have athletic footage of a full game and highlights; and you have prioritized your athletic program shortlist. What's next?

Outreach

Remember that first impressions are important. You need to be organized and professional, both in your communication with coaches and in your personal profile. You should start by creating a professional email address, such as first.name.last.name@gmail.com.

Email template

There is an example of an [introduction email](#) that you can refer to from our website. Use the template as a starting point and be sure to personalize the email to match your style and personality.

Coach and student-athlete insights

What are the expectations of a college coach when recruiting? How have student-athletes from Australia been recruited? What is their student-athlete experience like?

The pathway and everyone's story will be different. What is common to all however, is that they have talent. After talent is realized then it is important to be realistic of where your talents are best suited to the sports program and the academic rigor of the college you are aspiring to.

Check out the videos below. They will leave you inspired and provide you with some great insight that you can use in reaching your own goals! Good luck!

[Hear from the Arizona State Water Polo coach and 2018 senior Lena Mihailovic from Sydney](#)



[2018 senior Alanna Smith from Melbourne was the first international student on the Stanford basketball team](#)





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USB resources

- *2018/19 Guide For The College-Bound Student-Athlete*
- *Time Management: What Division I Student-Athletes Should Expect*
- *Frequently Asked Questions For International Student-Athletes*

Helpful links:

NCAA and country specific information

- [Country-specific email that a prospective student athlete \(psa\) will get when they register from Australia](#)
- [International Student Athletes landing page](#)

Core courses and grades

- [Core Courses](#)
- [Grade Point Average](#)
- [NCAA Guide to International Academic Standards](#) (Updated on-line every quarter)
- [International Academic Requirements](#)
- [Submitting International Documents](#)

Information to support you further

- [Suggestions on how to choose a college](#)
- [Stay on track for Division I NCAA Athletics timeline](#)
- [Initial-Eligibility Steps for International Students](#)
- [Search for NCAA athletic programs](#)
- [Map to help you locate NCAA athletic program member schools](#)

