

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

**KEEP PLAYING. KEEP LEARNING.  
KEEP GROWING. GAME ON.**



**GUIDE FOR THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT-ATHLETE**



*Your college sports experience starts here.*

### **Welcome to the NAIA Eligibility Center! We're here to help you.**

Students, coaches, parents and recruiters are encouraged to contact us if they have questions at any point in the process.

Email [ECinternational@naia.org](mailto:ECinternational@naia.org) | U.S. 1-816-595-8300 | Toll-free in the U.S. 1-800-881-6242.

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Standard Time, Monday through Friday; Customer service voice mail is 24/7.

### **Who needs to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center?**

All first-time NAIA student-athletes must register and receive an eligibility determination before they are permitted to play.

### **Do I need to register with the NAIA if I'm registering with the NCAA?**

Yes, the NAIA and NCAA are two separate associations with different certification processes. If you would like to play in the NAIA, you must register with the [NAIA Eligibility Center](#).

### **What does the registration process involve?**

- At [PlayNAIA.org](http://PlayNAIA.org) you'll fill out a profile about yourself, your academic history and sports experiences and pay for the registration. You'll get an NAIA ID number that will help you track your status.
- Have all schools you have attended send the required academic documents directly to the NAIA Eligibility Center
- Have your SAT / ACT test scores sent directly to the NAIA Eligibility Center.
- Share your NAIA ID number with your future NAIA coach so the coach can be sure that you are listed on his or her "Short List." A Short List contains the names of the coach's most serious recruits and provides the priority list for the NAIA Eligibility Center to begin the determination process. In some cases, your review cannot begin until you are placed on an NAIA school's Short List.

Once all of your complete information has been received, it will be evaluated by the NAIA Eligibility Center and your eligibility will be determined.

### **When do I need to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center?**

Most international students should register immediately after graduation or the end of the academic term/year. International students who will enroll in the fall term at an NAIA school should have their high school documentation sent no later than June. Don't wait until the summer holiday months when many schools close; it could delay your determination.

### **How much does it cost, and how do I pay?**

The one-time, non-refundable international registration fee is U.S. \$120. Regardless of where you live currently, if you attended high school or university outside of the United

States or its territories, you must pay the international fee. Graduates of U.S. military base or DoDEA schools pay the domestic fee. When you register, you can pay online by Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit cards. You also can mail a money order. (Please be sure the money order includes your name and NAIA ID number.) NAIA schools may not pay the fee on behalf of any student. International students do not qualify for fee waivers.

### **What are you asked about when you register online?**

Be prepared to provide thorough and accurate information. Any incorrect or missing information could result in a delay in processing your determination.

- **About Me** — Important contact information, places you have lived, when you plan to enroll, what sport you plan to play in the NAIA
- **Tell My Story** — Names and addresses of all of the secondary schools you have attended as well as other secondary school academic information
- **Tell My Story Continued** — Universities attended, sports and leagues you have been involved with after high school graduation—a full account of what you have done since high school graduation

### **Why do we ask about your sports experiences?**

The NAIA has a rule that helps to make sure that its student-athletes compete against other students with similar levels of training and competitive experience. Athletes who compete outside the traditional college setting can gain an unfair advantage. For each year after high school graduation in which you do not play college sports **and** you participate in competition that is deemed to be at university-level or above, you can be charged one of the four allowable seasons of competition. We need to know about your sports experiences to determine if this rule applies to you.

It is important to list all events and leagues in which you have played, regardless of their level, so that an accurate and quick determination can be made. Some competitions that are amateur in nature can be considered "countable competition" and thus could impact your eligibility. Failure to provide complete and factual information could result in potential penalties, including permanent banishment from the NAIA.

### **If I have played in sports competitions since high school graduation, can I still be eligible?**

Yes, you can. The NAIA Eligibility Center evaluates each competition individually. If the events or leagues you compete in are determined to be below university-level competition, it will not impact your eligibility.

### **What if I was not paid for playing sports after high school? Do I still need to give you information about competitions I participated in?**

Yes, you are required to list all events and leagues in which you have competed since graduating from high school, regardless of their level or standard. This includes recreational leagues, amateur leagues, church leagues, national teams, premier leagues, individual competitions or tournaments, or any other type of organized competition. Some competitions that are amateur in nature can be considered "countable competition" and thus could impact your eligibility.



**You must request to have the following submitted on your behalf:**

YOUR SECONDARY SCHOOL MUST SEND		IF ATTENDED UNIVERSITY OR POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY MUST SEND	TESTING AGENCY MUST SEND
<b>STAMPED AND SEALED COPIES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL DOCUMENTS</b>		<b>STAMPED AND SEALED COPIES OF UNIVERSITY DOCUMENTS</b>	<b>TEST SCORES</b>
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>School stamped COPIES of all secondary school academic records, transcripts, record of achievements, national testing exam results, etc., in the language of issuance.</p>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p>School stamped COPIES of your secondary school diploma, leaving certificate, national examination certificate, etc., in the original language of issuance.</p> <p>Go online to learn about <a href="#">which documents are required</a> for your country.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>School stamped copies of your official university transcripts in the original language of issuance from ALL post-secondary institutions (including all institutions attended in your home country or any other country).</p> <p>If you started courses but did not complete coursework and an official academic record does not exist, the registrar or secretary of the university/post-secondary institution must write a letter stating the period of enrollment, including first and last dates of attendance and your enrollment status (full-time or part-time). The letter also must include all</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>ACT or SAT test score sent directly from the testing agency using our code, 9876.</p> <p>(Do not confuse this with TOEFL scores. You do not need to send TOEFL scores; they do not fulfill any eligibility requirements.</p>
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Literal English translations of all academic records and letter from the translator stating their credentials as a translator. The translator cannot be related to you or an NAIA athletic department.</p>		<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Based on your cumulative grade average, class rank shows where you stood among the total graduates in your class (e.g. 14th of 144).</p> <p>A letter written on official school stationery by the secondary school headmaster or principal of the school where you received your diploma or completed secondary school studies, should state your academic placement upon high school graduation and the total number of students in the graduating class.</p>	
<p><b>MAIL / POST 1 2 3 TO THE NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER USING THIS METHOD:</b></p>			
<p>Documents should be sent to: NAIA Eligibility Center - Transcripts P.O. Box 15340 Kansas City, MO 64106 USA</p>		<p>Or, if using recorded delivery, delivery confirmation, FedEx, DHL, UPS, or other shipping companies NAIA Eligibility Center - Transcripts 1200 Grand Blvd, Suite 100 Kansas City, MO 64106 USA</p>	
<p>Note: Both the NAIA Eligibility Center and your NAIA school's Admissions Department will need your academic records to be sent to them. Be prepared to have multiple sets submitted for you. (Documents required by your NAIA Institution might differ from those required by the NAIA Eligibility Center.) NAIA Eligibility Center encourages schools to send school stamped copies of your original academic records instead of the only official copy of your academic records. The NAIA Eligibility Center CANNOT share or return documents to you or a third party.</p>			

**When should I have my school send my documents?**

You should have your records submitted to the NAIA Eligibility Center as soon as they are made available or at the conclusion of the current academic year. Plan on having a complete academic file submitted before starting the I-20 Visa process. If you have been out of school for some time, please have your school(s) submit your academic records now.

**Can my school fax or email my records?**

No, the NAIA Eligibility Center accepts only school stamped and sealed copies of your records via post.

**If I have a copy of my official academic records, can I send them to the NAIA?**

No, academic records must be submitted by schools on behalf of students. If you have a copy of your academic records, take them back to your secondary school. Ask a school official to make school stamped copies and enclose them in a sealed school envelope with a stamp over the flap to show that a school official was the last to handle the documents. Then the school should send the documents directly to the NAIA Eligibility Center.

**Should I have my school send my original certificates/records?**

Please do not have originals or the only official copy of certificates/records sent to the NAIA Eligibility Center. We cannot return any documents. If you only have one copy, please ask that your school make a copy of those records and stamp and sign the copies as official copies of the originals. We accept official school copies as long as they have been school stamped and are enclosed in a sealed school envelope and follow all other requirements.

**My school won't pay to send my stamped and sealed records. May I send them myself?**



If the school stamps and seals the envelope with their official seal, you or a parent may then place the school sealed and stamped envelope into another envelope and post to us. If we receive documents directly from students or parents that are not in a school sealed and stamped envelope from the school, we cannot use them for eligibility determination.

**Would it be easier if my school sent only the English versions of my academic records?**

No. If the original language of your records is not English, we require **both versions**. If we only receive the English translation, the record will be marked as incomplete and the student's eligibility decision will be delayed until the documents in the original language arrive.

**How can I get translations of my academic records if I cannot open the official sealed envelope from my secondary school?**

Request two sets of copies of official records. Have your school send one official stamped and sealed set to the NAIA Eligibility Center and give the second set to a translator.

**If I attended two different secondary schools, can one school send both records?**

No, each school that you have attended must submit the sealed and stamped copies of your academic records from that school.

**What should I do if my school does not issue a class rank letter?**

If your school does not issue class rank or the headmaster is unable to provide one on school stationery, your eligibility will be determined on the two other criteria: test scores and grade point average.

**My NAIA school says I need a credential evaluation (e.g. WES or AACRAO). Can I send the same report to the NAIA Eligibility Center?**

Credential evaluations, such as AACRAO or WES, can be submitted in addition to official academic records, but are not required and cannot be submitted in lieu of the official records. The NAIA Eligibility Center calculates GPA according to international academic standards and does not take WES or other evaluation services' evaluations at face value in determining eligibility in the NAIA. It is therefore possible that your WES or other credential evaluation could differ from the academic standards evaluated by the NAIA Eligibility Center.

**My NAIA school's Admissions Office has my academic records on file. Can they send a copy to the NAIA Eligibility Center?**

For non-U.S. records only, you may request that your NAIA school's Admissions Office submit stamped copies of your international academic records. These documents must come from the Admissions Office (**not** the athletics department) with a letter from an admissions officer stating that they received the academic records officially. If these records are incomplete, the official documents will have to be sent to us directly from the international institution.

If you have attended some high school or college in the United States, we cannot accept those records from your NAIA school; they must be come officially from the U.S. institution you attended.

**NAIA Eligibility Center**

Website: [PlayNAIA.org](http://PlayNAIA.org)

Phone: 1-816-595-8300

Toll free in the U.S.: 1-866-881-6242

Email: [ECinternational@naia.org](mailto:ECinternational@naia.org)

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 5 pm Central Standard Time. Customer service voice mail is 24/7.

Documents should be sent to:

NAIA Eligibility Center - Transcripts

P.O. Box 15340

Kansas City, MO 64106 USA

Or, if using recorded delivery, delivery confirmation, FedEx, DHL, UPS, or other shipping companies

NAIA Eligibility Center - Transcripts

1200 Grand Blvd, Suite 100

Kansas City, MO 64106 USA

**Tracking the status of your eligibility determination****How do I know if you received my documents?**

Log into your profile [www.PlayNAIA.org](http://www.PlayNAIA.org) and click on the tab that says "Status Page" to view your custom To Do List. If we have received and processed your documents, it will list them as "Received" with a green check mark.

**My documents have been signed for but aren't showing as "Received" on my online profile.**

Once documents are received, they must be processed and reviewed before your online status is updated. If your shipping records show that your documents have been signed for by the NAIA Eligibility Center, please check your online profile. If you still do not see a status update after a couple of days, please contact us at [ECinternational@naia.org](mailto:ECinternational@naia.org).

**My documents are listed as "Incomplete" on my online profile. What does this mean?**

It means that the documents we received contain only partial information needed. Details of what is missing will be shown on your online profile. You also will receive an email from the NAIA Eligibility Center explaining what is incomplete. You must submit additional documents before we can continue the evaluation. Please visit our country-by-country list of documents required for international students or contact us at [ECinternational@naia.org](mailto:ECinternational@naia.org).

**My documents are shown as "Not Official" on my online profile. What does this mean?**

A status of "not official" means that we cannot verify that the documents came from your school. (For instance, the envelope was not sealed and stamped by the school, or the records came from a parent or coach.) To continue the process, you must have your documents submitted officially.

**When will I know if I am eligible or not?**

Eligibility decisions are released when all of the following have taken place:

- Your online profile is submitted and all information is accurate and complete, including the athletics history.
- Your coach has placed you on his or her Short List.
- All academic records submitted on your behalf officially from all previous schools you have attended are marked as complete.
- Your official test score and/or class rank letter has been received.

**Fall enrollees** — Eligibility decisions will be released starting no earlier than May 1.

**Spring and winter enrollees** — Decisions will be released when all necessary documents and information have been submitted.

You can accept scholarships, sign with schools and practice with the team all prior to receiving your final eligibility decision. You cannot, however, play in NAIA competition prior to receiving an eligibility determination.

## Eligibility Requirements

### Is there an age limit in the NAIA?

No, there is no age limit for participation in the NAIA. Instead, students are restricted to four seasons of competition in a given sport and have 10 university semesters to complete those four seasons of competition.

### I have completed a degree equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree. Can I play sports in the NAIA while attending graduate school or achieving a second degree?

No. Once a student has achieved a U.S. Bachelor's Degree (or an equivalent degree in an international country) eligibility is exhausted within the NAIA.

### What are the eligibility requirements if I have never attended university?

If you have never started courses at a university or post-secondary institution, then you will be required to meet initial freshman eligibility standards. NAIA requirements for initial freshman eligibility state that a student must meet **two of the following three** criteria after high school graduation:

1. TEST SCORE REQUIREMENT	2. HIGH SCHOOL GPA REQUIREMENT	3. CLASS RANK REQUIREMENT
<b>Achieve a minimum of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT.</b>	<b>Achieve a minimum overall high school grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.</b>	<b>Graduate in the top half of your high school class.</b>
Tests must be taken on an international testing date, and scores must be achieved on a single test date. The minimum SAT must be achieved on the Critical Reading and Math sections only; the Writing score cannot be used. You must meet the score requirement on a test date prior to the start of the term in which you intend to participate in athletics.	The NAIA Eligibility Center will verify whether or not you have met this requirement by converting grades from your academic records to a U.S. 4.0 scale	To meet this requirement, the headmaster or principal of your secondary school must write a letter on school letterhead stating your high school graduation placement based on cumulative grades and the total number of students in your graduating class.  Other cases: Home school students, Private User (for England and British-patterned systems), and International GED students are not able to use the class rank requirement to meet initial freshman requirements, instead they must meet the test score and GPA requirements.

### What are the eligibility requirements if I have attended some university?

#### IF ATTENDED UNIVERSITY FOR ONLY ONE SEMESTER OR TERM: MUST PASS NINE U.S. CREDIT HOURS

Credits are converted to U.S. equivalents based on international transfer credit industry standards on a course-by-course basis, and those can vary by country and institution. Generally speaking, a student who attends one term of university abroad must complete with a passing grade at least 75% of the normal full-time load to meet the nine U.S. credit hour rule.

#### AND meet two of the following three incoming freshmen requirements:

1. TEST SCORE REQUIREMENT	2. HIGH SCHOOL GPA REQUIREMENT	3. CLASS RANK REQUIREMENT
<b>Achieve a minimum of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT.</b>	<b>Achieve a minimum overall high school grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.</b>	<b>Graduate in the top half of your high school class.</b>

### What are the eligibility requirements if I have attended multiple years of university?

Students who have attended multiple terms/years of university are required to meet the following standards:

- 24/36 Hour Rule**  
 To meet this requirement, you must have achieved 24 U.S. converted credits in the last two full-time terms of attendance. Credits are converted to their U.S. equivalents based on international transfer credit industry standards on a course-by-course basis, and can vary by country and institution
- Progress Rule**  
 To meet this rule, you must have achieved 24 U.S. credits for each season of competition charged, (i.e. a student charged two seasons of competition must have achieved 48 U.S. credits). The NAIA Eligibility Center will convert your credits to U.S. equivalents based on international transfer credit industry standards.
- GPA**  
 Minimum grade requirement of a U.S. 2.0 grade equivalent. Students who reach "junior" or "senior" standing or are charged two seasons of competition or more are required to have and maintain a 2.0 cumulative university GPA. The NAIA Eligibility Center will verify whether or not you have met this requirement by converting grades from your academic records to a U.S. 4.0 scale.