



FENCING PARENTS  
A FENCER'S GUIDE TO

## **NCAA RULES OF ATHLETE RECRUITMENT**

Includes everything a fencer needs to know about the basic rules governing athlete recruitment

# A FENCER'S GUIDE TO NCAA RULES OF ATHLETE RECRUITMENT

Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3

INCLUDES  
INFORMATION ON:  
The Recruitment Calendar,  
Recruiting Rules, Eligibility  
Rules, "Likely Letters and  
National Letters of Interest.

[www.fencingparents.org](http://www.fencingparents.org)



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# Introduction

Getting recruited to a Division 1 NCAA college fencing team can seem like a daunting process to those unfamiliar with the rules. On top of the stress of figuring out which NCAA coaches would be open to considering your fencer for recruitment to the team, there are numerous do's and don'ts to comply with, and a rigid calendar that governs when you can initiate conversations and when you can make "in person" contact with head coaches of the NCAA fencing teams that interest you.

It is important to remember that the majority of these strict rules and recruiting calendar apply specifically to colleges within Division 1.

During the recruiting process, all interactions with Division 1 head coaches are governed by strict NCAA rules. From initiating communication with the head coaches, to continuing the dialogue with the head coach on your fencing progress and expressing your strong interest in that college's fencing team, to conversations during unofficial college visits, to official college visits, to receiving and responding to the National Letter of Interest, or "Likely" Letter, these interactions are governed by strict NCAA rules and a recruitment calendar.

These strict athlete recruitment rules enforced by the NCAA are designed to maintain a level playing field for all potential athlete recruits across all sports, so that no one involved in the process can create an unfair advantage for any one student or category of students, and no student athlete will feel pressurized to accept an offer prematurely.

While colleges in Division 2 must adhere to NCAA eligibility rules, the rules on contact and the calendar are substantially more relaxed.

The rules applicable to Division 3 colleges are even less stringent. There is no athlete recruitment per se since students are admitted largely on academic merit (frequently through Early Decision), not sporting achievement. It is common for Division 3 coaches to advise fencers to submit their ED application, accompanied by a "heads up" from the coach to the admissions office that the applicant has been identified for the fencing team. Eligibility is determined on campus by the individual colleges.

## 3 Parts to the NCAA Rules of Athlete Recruitment for Fencers

We break down the rules into 3 key areas:

### Part 1 - Athlete Recruitment Calendar and Rules



## Part 2 - How Do Colleges Commit to the Fencer? - Likely Letters, National Letters of Intent, Early Decision and Regular Decision Admission

### Part 3 - Eligibility Rules

To produce this summary guide of the NCAA rules and calendar for fencer athlete recruitment, Fencing Parents conducted a thorough review of the guides, manuals, recruiting calendars and advisories available on the NCAA [website](#), the NLI [website](#), the Ivy League athlete recruitment website, and many other athlete recruitment and scholarship websites. We distilled the information down to the critical rules and information as they apply to the fencing athlete recruit. We reference the experiences of fencers and their parents, wherever possible, to give you a better sense of the rules in action.



*Find out who the Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 colleges are with our guide:*

[\*\*Complete List of US Colleges with Fencing Teams \(NCAA Approved and Club Level\)\*\*](#)

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# Part 1 - Recruiting Calendar and Rules

The most important rules to know are the one that control when you can approach and interact with the NCAA coaches about recruiting you to their fencing team. These rules include:

- when you can initiate interactions with a head coach,
- when head coaches can initiate interactions with you,
- when and where you can have in-person contact with the head coach
- the channel of interaction (phone, email, in-person)
- the substance of the interaction (when can you talk specifically about recruitment)
- the difference between “official” and “unofficial” visits
- when are unofficial visits allowed
- when are official visits allowed
- when is contact disallowed during the recruitment cycle

The NCAA specifically defines when a “**contact**” happens as any time a college coach says more than “Hello” during a face-to-face meeting with you or your parents off the college’s



campus. The rules governing “contact” are extremely strict. Many Division 1 NCAA coaches take the cautious approach, and literally will not engage with parents or fencers at NACs beyond the basic “hello” prior to Summer Nationals between the fencer’s junior and senior year.

The rules and calendar vary between Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 colleges, so please pay careful attention to which Division a college that you are interested in belongs.

You can download the Glossary of Athlete Recruitment Terms [HERE](#)

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## Division 1 Fencing Athlete Recruitment Calendar and Rules

### General Overview

The NCAA rules and calendar governing athlete recruitment are the strictest in Division 1. These strict rules on timing, channel of communication and substance of the communications apply only to interactions between the fencer, his/her parents or guardians and the NCAA coaches.

These restrictions do not apply to third party interactions concerning the fencer. So even though you and your parents are restricted in your communications with the coach, there are no restrictions on your club coach’s ability to communicate with the NCAA coach, or your ability to communicate with the current members of the NCAA fencing team that interests you.

According to the rules, very limited interaction about athlete recruitment between fencer and NCAA coach is allowed prior to a fencer’s junior year in high school. The restrictive rules on interaction with the NCAA coach are lifted in junior year. Junior year is when the courtship really begins between coach and fencer.

Sustained interactions by telephone and electronic correspondence between a fencer and coach about athlete recruitment are allowed beginning in junior year. The restrictions on unofficial visits to the campus to discuss athlete recruitment are also lifted at the start of junior year (the details are laid out below).

While off campus, in-person contact with the coach is allowed starting at Summer Nationals the year the fencer completes his/her junior year, many recruit-able fencers have already conducted their unofficial college visits during their junior year to meet the NCAA coaches long before Summer Nationals.

To put the operation of the NCAA rules in perspective, here are a few generally accepted practices in fencer athlete recruitment:



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- Ranking on the Junior National Points List (JNPL) after the age-out post Junior Olympics is by far the best indicator of recruit-ability to an NCAA Division 1 fencing team at an elite college.
- For the very elite fencers who rank within the top 32 to 50 on the JNPL at the start of their junior year, the courtship begins early in the year, and continues through to Summer Nationals at the end of junior year.
- If a fencer did not start his/her junior year in high school in the top ranks of the JNPL, there is time through junior year to improve fencing performance and climb the ranks of the JNPL.

It is important to remember that competitiveness as an athlete recruit is dependent on 3 factors:

1. Ranking on the JNPL, and
2. Position on the JNPL relative to high school graduation year peers being recruited for the same academic year.

For example, a fencer ranked 30 on the JNPL may be the 7th highest ranked fencer on the JNPL among his/her high school graduation year peers. The chances of that fencer being recruited are very good!

3. The number of open positions available on the NCAA college's fencing roster for your high school graduation year.

Those fencers who maintain or attain relatively strong positions on the JNPL post the Junior Olympics age-out in junior year will be the most desirable recruits for the NCAA coaches, provided they meet the academic criteria for admission. Many of these fencers will receive verbal offers of recruitment at or before Summer Nationals at the end of their junior year in high school.

For this elite group, once an academic read (preliminary academic assessment) has been done and the feedback shared with the fencer, then all that's left to do is complete the application, write the essay, and submit the application for admission as an athlete recruit.

For many other fencers, the conversations with the coaches continue through Summer Nationals into Fall of senior year. The opportunity to be recruited to the NCAA fencing team is still alive through Early Decision and Regular admissions.

The key to being successfully recruited is to stay well informed about where the potential open slots are within the NCAA teams, and to then pursue them with patience and perseverance.

[NCAA Division 1 Recruiting Rules 2018/2019](#)

[NCAA Division 1 Recruiting Calendar 2018/2019](#)



## [NCAA 2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#)



*Find out about the academic requirements of the 46 colleges with NCAA fencing teams and their fencer profiles in our FREE handbook*

[Fencer Vital Statistics at Colleges with NCAA Fencing Teams](#)

## Rules Governing Sophomore Year in High School - Division 1

During a fencer's sophomore year, the following actions are allowed:

1. **Recruitment Materials** - You may receive brochures for camps, questionnaires, NCAA materials and non-athletics recruiting publications.
2. **Telephone Calls** - You may make phone calls to the head coach at your expense. The head coach may not call you or return your call. The lack of reciprocity under this rule makes it difficult for the fencer to maintain a dialogue with the coach. Timing your call when the coach will pick up your call becomes important.

However, remember that your club fencing coach can reach out to the NCAA coach on your behalf and vice versa. The NCAA coach can also have members of his NCAA fencing roster reach out to you.

In practical terms, though, unless you belong in the very top ranks of the JNPL in sophomore year, it is too early for serious discussions about athlete recruitment - the academic performance picture is incomplete, and there is still a year to year and a half of fencing progress from both you and your graduation year fencing peers to be taken into account.

3. **Fencing Camp or Clinic** - You may attend fencing camps and clinics organized by the college coach, but you may not discuss athlete recruitment.

During a fencer's sophomore year, the following actions are not allowed:

1. **Off Campus Contact** - None is allowed, no face-to-face meetings (other than "hello") is allowed.
2. **Official Visit** - None is allowed. The coach cannot arrange for you and your family to visit the campus at the college's expense to discuss recruitment.



3. **Unofficial Visit** - None is allowed. You cannot visit the campus at your own expense to discuss athlete recruitment with the head coach. However, many fencers do visit campuses as part of their college tours with admissions offices, and they can stop by to say 'hello' to the coach, but they cannot discuss athlete recruitment specifically.

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## Rules Governing Junior Year in High School - Division 1

During a fencer's junior year, the following actions are allowed:

1. **Electronic Correspondence** (email, text message, instant messenger) - From September 1 of junior year, all forms of electronic correspondence are allowed between you (the fencer) and the coach throughout the year including during dead periods. However, all correspondence must be private between you and the coach until you provide a written commitment to the NCAA college.

You can now email your fencing resume and your grades (and test scores, if any) to the NCAA coach. Those already recruited advise that you should be very pro-active in following up with updates on your fencing and academic progress throughout your junior year.

If the coach doesn't respond to your initial email, you should use your discretion whether to continue to send updates. The coach may not have responded for a variety of reasons - you are not a good academic fit, the roster is full, the coach wants someone higher ranked than you, the coach is already considering someone else... Sometimes, the candidate that the coach was considering picks another NCAA college, or your performance and ranking improves and you then rise into contention. You may need to do some sleuthing to stay on top of the situation, and remember that it's not over till it's over. Persistence and patience may yet pay off for you.

Even if the coach responds with a "no", you can still check-in occasionally to see if anything has changed.

When making your target list of colleges to approach for athlete recruitment, make sure that you are not too big of an academic stretch for the college in question. Some NCAA coaches have more influence to stretch the academic limits than others, but even then, the final admission decision lies with the admissions office not the NCAA coach. The coach will have a good idea of what academic scores are within range of acceptability for the admissions office.

2. **Recruiting Materials** - From September 1 of your junior year, you can start receiving athlete recruitment material.





3. **Telephone Calls** - From September 1 of your junior year, the NCAA coach may make an unlimited number of phone calls to you about athlete recruitment. You may also make telephone calls to the coach at your expense. There are no restrictions on phone calls during dead periods.
4. **Off Campus Contact** - Off campus in-person contact with the NCAA coach is only allowed 1) after you have completed your junior year in high school, and 2) after you have completed all your events at Summer Nationals. Unlike other sports that are restricted to a July 1 start date for in person contact after junior year, contact for fencing athlete recruitment between fencer and coach can take place as soon as these 2 conditions are fulfilled.
5. **Official Visit** - You are allowed to make an official visit (at the college's expense) after September 1 of your junior year to discuss athlete recruitment except during any dead period.
6. **Unofficial Visit** - You are allowed to make unofficial visits to the college and NCAA coach at anytime after September 1 of your junior year to discuss athlete recruitment except during any dead period.

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## Rules Governing Senior Year in High School - Division 1

During a fencer's senior year, the following actions are allowed:

1. **Electronic Correspondence** (email, text message, instant messenger)- The freedom to engage the coach electronically since September 1 of junior year continues in senior year, including during dead periods. The same caveat that the correspondence must be private between you and the coach until you provide a written confirmation to the NCAA college still applies.

The Fall of a fencer's senior year is still fully within recruiting season, and you should continue being pro-active in following-up with the coaches.

2. **Recruiting Materials** - You are allowed to receive all manner of recruiting materials
3. **Telephone Calls** - Both you and the coach are free to communicate by telephone throughout senior year, including dead periods.
4. **Off Campus Contact** - You and the coach can have in-person contact off-campus, including during NACs that take place during dead periods, although, the coach is limited to making contact with you no more than 3 times off campus.

However, once you provide a written commitment such as signing a National Letter of Interest, accepting a written offer of admission or financial aid, or the college receives a financial deposit from you, then the number of contacts and evaluation between you and the NCAA coach are unlimited.



5. **Official Visit** - You are allowed one official visit (paid by the college) per college up to a maximum of 5 colleges in Division 1.
6. **Unofficial Visit** - You can make an unlimited number of unofficial visits to colleges, except during the dead period where you may not visit.

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## Division 2 Athlete Recruitment Calendar and Rules

The rules governing timing, channel and substance of interactions between fencer and coach are much fewer and simpler in Division 2.

**Recruiting Materials** - You may receive brochures for camps, questionnaires, NCAA materials and non-athletics recruiting publications at any time. Beginning June 15 between sophomore and junior year, a coach may begin sending you printed recruiting materials

**Telephone Calls** - A fencer can make unlimited calls to the coach about athlete recruitment at any time, so long as the fencer pays for the calls. Beginning June 15 between sophomore and junior year, the coach can make unlimited calls to the fencer about athlete recruitment.

**Off Campus Contact** - Beginning June 15 between sophomore and junior year, the coach can have an unlimited number of contacts off campus with the fencer and his/her parents and guardians about athlete recruitment.

**Official Visit** - Beginning June 15 between sophomore and junior year, a fencer may make official visits to NCAA colleges without limit.

**Unofficial Visit** - Unofficial visits can be made at any time, without limits except during dead periods where no visits are allowed.

Download the Division 2 Rules and Calendar below:

[NCAA Division 2 Recruiting Rules 2018/2019](#)

[NCAA Division 2 Recruiting Calendar 2018/2019](#)

[NCAA 2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#)

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## Division 3 Athlete Recruitment Rules and Calendar

The rules and calendar are very simple. There are no dead periods.

**Recruiting Materials** - The fencer can receive all manner of printed materials about recruiting at any time

**Telephone Calls** - There are no limits on telephone calls between fencer and coach at any time to discuss athlete recruitment. The only condition is that the fencer pays for his/her calls.

**Off Campus Contact** - After completion of your sophomore year, a college coach can have unlimited contact with you and your parents or guardians at anytime.

**Official Visit** - Starting January 1 of your Junior year, you may make an unlimited number of official visits to a NCAA Division 3 campus.

**Unofficial Visit** - A fencer may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits to NCAA Division 3 colleges at any time.

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## Part 2 - How and When Do Colleges Commit to the Fencer?

All 7 of the Ivy League colleges in Division 1 may issue Likely Letters to their potential athlete recruits. The remaining 19 colleges in Division 1 and the 4 colleges in Division 2 may issue National Letters of Intent to the potential athlete recruits. The ramifications of these letters are quite different.

### Likely Letters from the Ivy League

Elite fencers considered as potential athlete recruits by the Ivy League are typically invited beginning on July 1 at the end of junior year to submit their academic credentials for a preliminary assessment by the admissions office. Once the admissions office confirms that the potential athlete recruit is an academic fit, the potential recruit is then invited to submit a complete application (test scores, transcripts, essays, and recommendations) by the end of summer before the start of senior year to the admissions office for a thorough assessment.



Verbal commitments from the Ivy League coach are not offers of admission as the offer can only come from the Admissions Office.

**Fencers pursuing athlete recruitment to the Ivy League should be aware of the following guidance from the [Ivy League Prospective Athlete Information](#) page:**

*“Coaches may communicate to the Admissions Office their support for candidates who are athletic recruits. Candidates are encouraged to ask coaches directly about the coach’s level of interest in them as potential athletic recruits, and should be prepared for coaches to inquire about the candidate’s level of interest as well. Ivy League coaches may indicate the extent to which a candidate’s interest will affect their willingness to support an application, so that candidates can make informed decisions about potential opportunities. Please note that while a coach may ask whether or not his or her school is a candidate’s top choice, a coach may not require a candidate to refrain from visiting or applying to other schools, or to withdraw applications to other schools, as a condition for support during the admissions process. Candidates should expect Ivy League coaches to be honest and forthcoming during the recruiting process. We ask candidates to be honest with coaches as well.”*

According to the [Ivy League Prospective Athlete Information](#) page, Ivy League schools base admissions decisions on each candidate’s academic achievements as well as personal strengths and accomplishments, such as athletic achievement, other extracurricular activities and community service. Your essays should meet these standards, and your recommendation letters should reflect that you meet these standards.

From October 1 of a potential athlete recruit’s senior year, the admissions offices from the Ivy League commence issuing their Likely Letters to those athlete recruits who have submitted complete applications and will likely be admitted to the college for the following academic year.

**From the [Ivy League Prospective Athlete Information](#) page clarifying the meaning of a “Likely Letter”:**

*“Under certain circumstances institutions may issue a letter prior to the final admissions decision indicating that a candidate is “likely” to be admitted. This letter means that as long as the applicant sustains the academic and personal record reflected in the completed application, the institution will send a formal admission offer on the appropriate notification date. Only the Admissions Office can issue a likely letter, and only after receiving a completed application and all required materials. Likely letters may not be issued prior to October 1 of the prospect’s senior year in high school. “*

The Likely Letter from an Ivy League college’s admissions office is as good as an offer of admission, provided the athlete recruit maintains his/her academic performance. It is up to the athlete recruit to accept the offer when the formal notification arrives.



Ivy League colleges do not offer athletic or academic scholarships to anyone. Many of the Ivy League colleges offer very generous financial aid packages for families that qualify, so the disadvantage of not getting a scholarship could be ameliorated.

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## National Letters of Intent (“NLI”)

The NLI is a program managed by the NCAA, with governance oversight from the Collegiate Commissioners Association. Membership in the program is entirely voluntary, and its current membership includes 657 Division 1 and Division 2 colleges.

All of the Division 1 colleges other than the Ivy League, and all of the Division 2 colleges with NCAA fencing teams are members of the NLI. Division 3 colleges are not members of the NLI.

The defining characteristic of the NLI is that all institutional members of the NLI commit to provide athletic scholarships to their NLI athlete recruits who sign on.

While the NLI is a strictly voluntary program, where colleges are not bound to join the program, and athlete recruits and their parents are not bound to sign the NLI, the NLI does become a binding agreement once it is signed by both parties.

The binding agreement relates to the following 2 commitments:

- the athlete recruit agrees to attend the college for a full academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters), if accepted
- the college agrees to provide athletic financial aid to the athlete for one academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters), if accepted

Once an NLI is signed, the student athlete must cease communication with all other colleges he/she has been in touch with about recruitment.

Download an example of the NLI [HERE](#).

**IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE NLI IS **NOT** AN OFFER OF ADMISSION TO THE COLLEGE.**

The athlete recruit must still submit a complete application (transcripts, test scores, essays and recommendations) to the college's admissions office for a thorough assessment. It is reasonable to expect that the application will be supported by the NCAA coach in the case where an NLI is issued by the college.



In the event that the athlete recruit is not offered admission to the college, then the NLI is null and void. That athlete recruit will not be allowed to sign an NLI with another college in the same year.

For fencing, the signing period for an NLI for the current recruiting season runs from November 14, 2018 to August 1, 2019. Under the rules, the NLI must be signed within 7 days of its issuance. NLIs can be issued by member colleges throughout the signing period.

Many NLI colleges have, at least, one national signing day, usually set up for college football NLIs. Signing day for other sports at these colleges are usually scheduled to coincide with the signing of college football NLIs.

There are penalties for breaking an NLI agreement, including requiring the student athlete to serve a one year in-residence period with the next NLI college he/she joins, and the student athlete may also lose one season of competition in all sports.

You can review the NLI Quick Reference Guide [HERE](#)

You can review the NLI Administrative Guidelines [HERE](#)

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## Early Decision and Regular Admission

Not all fencing athletic recruits receive Likely Letters from the Ivy League or National Letters of Intent from the NLI colleges.

In the case of the Ivy League colleges, potential athlete recruits who were not invited to submit their academic credentials in the summer between junior and senior year, may be advised by the Ivy League coach to submit Early Decision applications in the Fall of their senior year in high school. It is wise to make sure that the coach intends to support your Early Decision application in these circumstances.

A latecomer, for whatever reason, may also be advised by the Ivy League coach to submit an application through the regular admissions process, and receive coach support.

As fencing athletic scholarships are quite limited, not every fencer recruited to an NLI college fencing team will receive an athletic scholarship, or even a part of one. These recruits are known as walk-on recruits, and they will not be issued an NLI to sign. However, regular financial aid through the college is still available to them. Many of these walk-on recruits will be invited to apply for admission through Early Decision or Regular Admission.



## Part 3 - NCAA Eligibility Rules

NCAA Eligibility Rules are in place to determine a student athlete's:

- minimum academic fitness for college
- amateur status, and
- qualification for athletic scholarships from NLI colleges.

To facilitate the determination of an athlete recruit's overall eligibility, the NCAA requires all student athletes (including fencers) pursuing a path to NCAA sports in college in Division 1 or Division 2 to create Certification Accounts through the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#).

No student athlete (including fencers) can compete on Division 1 and Division 2 teams, make official visits (paid by the college) or sign National Letters of Intent until they have completed all the required steps in the Certification Account, and paid the requisite fees.

All relevant information on the fencer's academic standing (GPA, test scores, transcripts and fulfillment of NCAA course requirements) are uploaded into the fencer's Certification Account for assessment by the Eligibility Center. Student athletes (including fencers) are also required to answer detailed questions to satisfy NCAA rules on their amateurism.

Eligibility rules for Division 3 student athletes (including fencers) are determined by the individual colleges, and not by the NCAA. Division 3 colleges do not award athletic scholarships, though many Division 3 student athletes (including fencers) receive merit and need-based financial aid.

Fencers who are interested in joining a Division 3 fencing team, or if they are not sure which path they will pursue can set up a Profile Page (instead of a Certification Account) through the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) free of charge.

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## Opening Accounts with the NCAA Eligibility Center

### Division 1 and Division 2 Certification Accounts

All high school fencers with an interest in joining an NCAA Division 1 or Division 2 fencing team must create an online Certification Account with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) in order for the NCAA to evaluate eligibility and provide eligibility certification.



Here's [the checklist of basic requirements](#) to open a Certification Account

Fencers cannot compete on Division 1 and Division 2 teams, make official visits (paid by the college) or sign National Letters of Intent until they have completed all the required steps in the Certification Account, and paid the requisite \$90 fee, or received a fee waiver as the case may be. The Certification Account fee for International students is \$150.

The NCAA recommends that student athletes create this account in their sophomore year, though many fencers skip this step till sometime in their junior year of high school.

## Division 3 Profile Page

Fencers interested mainly in Division 3 colleges, or are not yet sure which Division they are interested in, may create a Profile Page online with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). There is no fee for a Profile Page.

The Profile Page can always be transitioned to a Certification Account should a fencer decide to pursue a spot on a Division 1 or Division 2 team.

The complete details for setting up a Certification Account or Profile Page can be found in the NCAA [2018-2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).

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## Determining Academic Eligibility

### NCAA Academic Requirements for Division 1 Colleges

Most fencers pursuing athlete recruitment opportunities at Division 1 colleges completely surpass the NCAA minimum academic standards. Their bigger challenge lies in meeting the high academic standards set by the colleges, especially the academically elite colleges in Division 1.

Regardless, fencers must still comply with the requirements of the Certification Account to be deemed academically eligible. Academic eligibility certification is also necessary for a fencer to receive an athletic scholarship from an NLI college.

For fencers to meet NCAA academic eligibility criteria for Division 1 colleges, they must:

- complete 16 credits in [core approved courses](#) in instructor led classes (10 of which must be completed before the start of the 7th semester, and 16 in 8 semesters) including
  - 4 years of English,
  - 3 years of Math (Algebra I or higher),





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- 2 years of Natural/physical science (including 1 year of lab),
  - 1 year of an additional English, Science or Math class,
  - 2 years of Social science, and
  - 4 years of additional subjects in any of the following areas of English, Math, Science, Social Science, Foreign language., Comparative religion or philosophy.
- earn a minimum 2.3 core course GPA
- take the SAT or ACT, and submit scores directly to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) (code 9999)
- earn a SAT or ACT score that matches the core GPA on the Division 1 full qualifier sliding scale. An illustration of how the sliding scale works can be found in the [2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).
- after 6 semesters of high school, have their school counselor directly upload official transcripts directly to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). If a fencer attended more than one high school, then official transcripts from every high school attended must be uploaded directly to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#), except when a fencer attended junior and senior high school in the same school district, then only one transcript is required from the senior high school.
- submit final official transcripts and provide proof of graduation from high school
- have no open academic tasks

You can obtain a copy of the NCAA Division 1 Academic Fact Sheet [HERE](#)



*Find out about the academic requirements of the 46 colleges with NCAA fencing teams and their fencer profiles in our FREE handbook*

[Fencer Vital Statistics at Colleges with NCAA Fencing Teams](#)

The Division 1 college interested in recruiting a student athlete will place the student athlete's name on the institutional request list with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). Only then will the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) take steps to determine the academic eligibility of the student athlete. This is done by matching GPA with test scores on a sliding scale (balances test scores with GPA). An illustration of how the sliding scale works can be found in the [2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).

Academic eligibility in Division 1 can fall into any one of 4 categories:



- **Early Academic Qualifier** - awarded if specific criteria are met after 6 semesters of high school. The Early Academic Qualifier can compete, practice and receive an athletic scholarship in their 1st year of enrollment in the Division 1 college.
- **Qualifier** - may practice, compete and receive an athletic scholarship in the 1st year of enrollment in the Division 1 college
- **Academic Redshirt** - may practice during the 1st academic term, and receive an athletic scholarship, but may NOT compete in the 1st year of enrollment at the Division 1 college. Must pass either 8 quarter or 9 semester hours to practice in the following term
- **Non Qualifier** - may not practice, compete or receive an athletic scholarship during the 1st year of enrollment at the Division 1 college.

You can find the complete details of how academic eligibility is determined for Division 1 colleges, including how the NCAA evaluates home schooled student fencers, online schools and the GED in the [NCAA 2018-2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).

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## NCAA Academic Requirements for Division 2 Colleges

As with the Division 1 schools, the NCAA sets minimum academic standards for student athletes (including fencers) before they can play an NCAA sport at a Division 2 college. Academic eligibility also determines if a fencer qualifies for an athletic scholarship.

Again, most fencers pursuing athlete recruitment to a Division 2 college would far surpass these NCAA academic eligibility standards. Compliance with the requirements of the Certification is still mandatory to obtain academic eligibility in Division 2.

For fencers to meet NCAA academic eligibility criteria for Division 2 colleges, they must:

- Complete 16 credits in [core approved courses](#) in instructor led classes including:
  - 3 years of English,
  - 2 years of Math (Algebra I or higher),
  - 2 years of Natural/physical science (including 1 year of lab),
  - 3 years of an additional English, Science or Math class,
  - 2 years of Social science, and
  - 4 years of additional subjects in any of the following areas of English, Math, Science, Social Science, Foreign language., Comparative religion or philosophy.
- earn minimum of 2.2 core course GPA
- take the SAT or ACT, and submit scores directly to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) (code 9999)



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- earn a SAT or ACT score that matches the core GPA on the Division 2 full qualifier sliding scale. An illustration of how the sliding scale works can be found in the [2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).
- upload official transcripts directly to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). If a fencer attended more than one high school, then official transcripts from every high school attended must be uploaded directly to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#), except when a fencer attended junior and senior high school in the same school district, then only one transcript is required from the senior high school.
- submit final official transcripts and provide proof of graduation from high school
- have no open academic tasks

You can obtain a copy of the NCAA Division 2 Academic Fact Sheet [HERE](#).

The Division 2 college interested in recruiting a student athlete (including a fencer) will place the student athlete's name on the institutional request list with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). Only then will the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) take steps to determine the academic eligibility of the student athlete. This is done by matching GPA with test scores on a sliding scale (balances test scores with GPA). An illustration of how the sliding scale works can be found in the [2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).

You can obtain a copy of the NCAA Division 2 Academic Fact Sheet [HERE](#).

Academic eligibility in Division 2 can fall into any one of 4 categories:

- **Early Academic Qualifier** - awarded if specific criteria are met after 6 academic semesters. An Early Academic Qualifier may practice, compete and receive an athletic scholarship in their 1st year of enrollment at a Division 2 college.
- **Qualifier** - may practice, compete and receive an athletic scholarship in the 1st year of enrollment in the Division 2 college
- **Partial Qualifier** - may practice and receive an athletic scholarship but may not compete in the 1st year of enrollment at a Division 2 college
- **Non Qualifier** - may not practice, compete or receive an athletic scholarship in the 1st year of enrollment at a Division 2 college

You can find the complete details of how academic eligibility is determined for Division 2 colleges, including how the NCAA evaluates home schooled student fencers, online schools and the GED in the [NCAA 2018-2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).



## Amateurism

### NCAA Amateurism Requirements for Division 1 and Division 2 Colleges

Many of the issues that arise with amateurism relate to the “big money” sports, and these issues are not applicable to fencers.

Issues reviewed as part of the Amateurism Certification process include:

- Delaying your full-time collegiate enrollment to participate in organized competition.
- Playing with professionals.
- Signing a contract with a professional team.
- Participating in tryouts or practices with a professional team.
- Accepting payment or preferential treatment/benefits for playing sports.
- Accepting prize money.
- Accepting benefits from an agent or prospective agent.
- Involvement with a recruiting service

The NCAA recommends that student athletes enrolling at Division 1 and Division 2 colleges in the Fall should request for their Final Amateurism Certification on or before April 1 of that year. Those planning to enroll in the following Spring should request their Final Amateurism Certification on or before October 1 prior to enrollment.

### Delayed Enrollment

Under NCAA rules, a fencer accepted onto a Division 1 or Division 2 fencing team is granted a 12 month grace period before he/she must enroll at the college in order to maintain his/her NCAA eligibility. At Division 1 colleges, a fencer has 5 calendar years to compete in 4 seasons of NCAA competition. At Division 2 colleges, a fencer has 10 semesters or 15 quarters to complete 4 seasons of competition. Should a fencer not enroll at the Division 1 or Division 2 college at the earliest opportunity after the grace period, and that fencer continues to compete in organized competition (including NACS and FIE events), the fencer could lose one season of NCAA eligibility, and may be also required to complete an academic year in residence at the NCAA college before regaining eligibility to compete.

### Accepting Prize Money Pre-Enrollment

Fencers in Division 1 have limited ability to accept prize money before enrolling in college. They are limited to amounts that do not exceed actual and necessary expenses, and the prize money must come from an amateur team or sponsor of the event. There are no limits on amounts or sources of prize money that a Division 2 fencer can accept pre-enrollment.



Actual and necessary expenses are defined by the NCAA as:

- Meals and lodging directly tied to competition or practice directly related to the competition.
- Transportation expenses, such as to and from practice, training or competition.
- Apparel, equipment and supplies related to competition or practice directly related to competition.
- Coaching and instruction, or the use of facilities and entry fees.
- Health or medical insurance, medical treatment and physical therapy directly associated with an individual's participation on a team or in an event.
- Other reasonable expenses such as laundry money.

## Other Pre-Enrollment Rules

Other pre-enrollment rules on try outs, professional drafts and receiving benefits from agents are not applicable to fencers in general.



*Find out more about the academic requirements of the 46 colleges with NCAA fencing teams and their fencer profiles in our **FREE handbook***

[Fencer Vital Statistics at Colleges with NCAA Fencing Teams.](#)

## International Students

The NCAA has specific guidelines and rules on academic eligibility and amateurism for international student athletes interested in NCAA sports at Division 1 and Division 2 colleges.

These guidelines and rules, as well as specific instructions on how to submit academic documentation and translations can be found on the NCAA website [HERE](#).

International students must remember that the NCAA requires you to submit SAT or ACT scores as well. So, you need to prepare in advance to take one of these tests.



## Home Schooled Students

Attending online school with independent instructors is not home schooling.

The NCAA defines home school as circumstances where instruction is parent led, or where instruction is provided by a parent-directed tutor.

They include classes where the parent or parent-directed tutor:

- Plans and delivers actual instructional activities such as lectures, discussions, tutorials, feedback or assistance.
- Determines the student's comprehension of the material by grading and evaluating student performance and achievement on assignments and assessments and providing appropriate re-teaching and feedback.
- Determines the overall grade the student achieved in the course.
- Places the grade on a transcript or grade report or reports the grade to an approved home school umbrella program.

The NCAA expects home schooled student athletes to adhere to the same rules as student athletes in a regular school environment with instructor led classes. The home schooled student athlete must register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#), and conform to all academic eligibility and amateurism requirements.

Details on submission of home school documents to the Eligibility Center and other home school resources can be found in the NCAA [2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#) and the NCAA website [HERE](#)

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## Education Impacting Disabilities ("EID")

For academic eligibility purposes, the NCAA will make accommodation for student athlete's who currently suffer from an impairment that will have a substantial impact on a student's academic performance.

The NCAA allows student athletes with documented EID to submit the documentation to receive accommodation.

Details on how to apply for EID accommodation can be found at page 30 of the NCAA [2018/2019 Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete](#).



## A Fencing Parents' Guide Series

*This guide is designed to provide fencers and their parents with an overview of the NCAA rules only. We do not have specific knowledge of the athlete recruitment practices of the individual NCAA colleges. We strongly recommend that you communicate directly with the colleges and NCAA coaches for specifics relating to your athlete recruitment. If you special circumstances, you must contact the NCAA or the NCAA college to discuss your circumstances.*



[www.fencingparents.org](http://www.fencingparents.org)