

Swimming & Diving in College

By Mark Jedow, Head Swimming Coach, Winston Churchill High School, San Antonio, Texas

Original posting 11/05/05

First revision 08/29/11

Second revision 08/20/13

Third revision 03/01/16

Fourth revision 08/12/16

These pages are and will be devoted entirely to Collegiate Swimming and is designed to serve as a resource for high school swimmers who aspire to continue their competition as they move on to the college or university scene. It contains a great deal of information regarding scholarships and the various levels of NCAA and other Collegiate Athletic Organizations. The information available here should be viewed as being dynamic in that it will be revised and updated as required in order to keep the data current. In addition, at the very bottom of the page, will be found a number of "Useful Links" to other relevant Web Sites.

<u>NCAA</u>	<u>NAIA</u>	<u>NJCAA</u>	<u>Scholarships</u>	<u>Finding a College</u>
<u>Recruiting</u>	<u>Making Contact</u>	<u>Campus Visits</u>	<u>Timetable</u>	<u>Useful Links</u>

Mission

To provide prospective collegiate student athletes and parents with information necessary to help guide them through the collegiate search process.

For Consideration

Student athletes and parents as you use this guide here is an interesting factoid to consider. The National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) estimates that over 6.5 million high school athletes are engaged in NFHS-sponsored sports programs annually. This equates to roughly 1.2 million high school seniors each year. Conversely, there are roughly 30,000 Division I grant-in-aid scholarships available, many of which are not full scholarships. Remember you are a student first and your goal is first to earn a degree not just swim.

In terms of collegiate swimming opportunities according to the NCAA in 2012 there were 527 Women's and 413 Men's Swimming & Diving Teams across all NCAA Divisions.

Credits

Much of the information on this Web Page is compiled from many sources and by no means is meant to be the only source of information you should use. The sources used for the creation of this site can be found at the bottom of the page.

Texas High School Coaches Association Free Webinar:

FREE [NCAA/NAIA/JUCO Eligibility and Recruiting Webinar](#)

2016-2017 NCAA Guide for the Student-Athlete

Levels of Collegiate Swimming & Diving

There are presently five competitive levels of collegiate swimming & diving sponsored by three collegiate organizations. A description of each organization and levels they sponsor is outlined below.

NCAA

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), is a non-profit association comprised of more than 1260 schools and conferences. The NCAA membership is divided into three legislative and competitive Divisions (I, II, and III). Colleges select, and apply for a classification level that best meets their institutions educational and athletic mission. In the fall of 2015 there were 972 active member schools which offered Swimming & Diving, of which 546 are Women's teams and 426 are Men's Programs. The most notable difference between the divisions is that Division I and II institutions may offer athletic scholarships while Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships.

Division I

NCAA Division I institutions are comprised primarily of large schools with enrollments that range from 3,500-50,000+ students. College institutions in this classification can, if they choose to, offer athletic scholarships for student athletes. The NCAA sets the number of full athletic scholarships a school can fund. Presently the limits for Division I Swimming & Diving scholarships is as follows:

Women's Scholarships: 14

Men's Scholarships: 9.9

Number of Division I Swimming & Diving Programs:

Women's Programs 2015: 196

Men's Programs 2015: 134

Athletic scholarships typically are limited to one year and can be renewed annually for up to five years out of a six-year period. "There is no such award as a four year scholarship." Athletic aid can be increased, reduced or even canceled annually. Programs may offer full scholarships (includes tuition, room, board, fees and books) or any type of partial aid such as tuition only or money for books. The total financial aid package (athletic scholarships, grants, student loans, booster club or civic scholarships) an athlete receives cannot not exceed the total cost for attending an institution for one year.

Ivy League Conference: Ivy League member institutions include the following: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton and Yale. These Division I programs do not offer athletic scholarships and acceptance to any of these institutions is based upon a rigid academic standard. All Ivy League student athletes are rated upon an Academic Index rating scale that each member institution must follow. Students are rated based upon their G.P.A., Class Rank, College Board SAT and ACT Scores, high school course load, and community service involvement. Financial aid awards are offered after a student athlete has been accepted on a need based assessment that has no bearing whether a student will be accepted or not.

Division I Admission Requirements:

Each student athlete desiring to compete at the NCAA Division must complete a **"Certification Process"** before they are eligible to be recruited by an NCAA Division one institution. The criteria falls under two main categories Academic Eligibility and Amateurism Eligibility. Students and Parents are encouraged to begin the college recruiting information process beginning at the start of a student's 9th grade year. All student athlete should visit the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) to stay current of the ever changing requirements for NCAA eligibility.

The NCAA current requires that all high school graduates meet a rigorous set of academic requirements to be eligible for NCAA Division Sports: There are presently two sets of requirements a student athlete must meet in order to be eligible for Division I Athletics. The links provided are the most recently released reference guides for NCAA Division 1 Athletics.

[NCAA Quick Reference Guide for 2016](#)

[NCAA Eligibility Power Point Slides For 2016](#)

www.2point3.org NCAA Sponsored Information

The NCAA Eligibility Center would like to let you know about new and upcoming academic rule changes that impact the classes of 2013 and 2016 and beyond, and whether your college-bound student-athletes will be eligible for practice, competition and financial aid in their first year at an NCAA Division I or II college or university.

Division I Changes for Fall of 2016—Overview

1. Minimum required core-course grade-point average (GPA) is 2.300.
2. Ten of the 16 required core courses must be completed before the beginning of the seventh semester (senior year).
 - a. Seven of these 10 required courses must be English, math or natural/physical science.
 - b. A repeat of one of the "locked in" courses will not be used if taken after the seventh semester begins.
3. Increase in the overall core-course GPA as it relates to the ACT or SAT score, which results in a new sliding scale. Who does this impact? Your incoming ninth grade class (class of 2016) must meet these new requirements if they plan to participate in intercollegiate athletics at the Division I level.

To participate in Division I athletics or receive an athletic scholarship during the first year of college, a student-athlete must:

Complete the 16 core-course requirement in eight semesters:

- **4 years of English**
- **3 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)**
- **2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by the high school)**
- **1 extra year of English, math or natural or physical science**
- **2 years of social science**
- **4 years of extra core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, non-doctrinal religion or philosophy)**

The core courses listed above are based upon an NCAA list of qualified courses. Also known as "Q" courses in the clearinghouse. School districts are required to submit courses descriptions to the NCAA and the NCAA determines which courses they will allow to count towards the "Q" core credits above. Not all courses that are accepted by a states or local school districts will count towards credits for graduation count as courses under the NCAA Clearinghouse.

Also, the NCAA requires that students pass each semester of a course to earn clearinghouse credit for the requirements above. The table below provides some examples of how a student could pass a course for HS graduation credit but not receive full credit from the NCAA. Also the NCAA does not allow a student to retake a High School class for credit in the HS setting. Each high school course attempt is a one and done situation so if a student fails a course such as English as a 9th grader and has to retake the class in summer school or as sophomore the NCAA will not recognize that course as credited for the clearinghouse. Another acceptable English class will have to be taken and passed to earn clearinghouse credit.

NCAA Clearinghouse Credits Vs HS Graduation Credits

Course	1st Semester Grade	2nd Semester Grade	Final Average	Graduation Credit	NCAA Credit
English I	65	75	70	Yes	Yes 0.5 Credits
Geometry	69	69	70 (Teacher Choice)	Yes	No
Biology	75	65	70	Yes	Yes 0.5 Credits
World Geography	90	69	80	Yes	Yes 0.5 Credits
Healthy Lifestyles	95	(1/2 Year Course)	95	Yes	No (Not core class)
Chemistry	71	80	76	Yes	Yes 1 Credit

Earn a minimum required grade-point average in core courses.

Earn a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches the core course grade-point average and test-score sliding scale. (For example, a 3.000 core-course grade-point average needs at least a 620 SAT).

Amateurism Eligibility

All incoming student-athletes must be certified as an amateur student-athlete. With global recruiting becoming more common, determining the amateur status of college-bound student-athletes can be challenging. All college-bound student-athletes, including international students, need to adhere to NCAA amateurism requirements in order to preserve their eligibility for NCAA intercollegiate athletics.

Students must earn their clearance from the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#):

All high school Juniors need to register and be cleared through the Eligibility Center in order for a college to be able to actively recruit a student-athlete.

Division II

NCAA Division II institutions are comprised primarily of small to medium sized schools with enrollments that range from 1,500-15,000 students. College institutions in this classification can, if they choose to, offer athletic scholarships for student athletes. The NCAA sets the number of full athletic scholarships a school can fund. Presently the limits for Division II swimming scholarships are as follows:

Women's Scholarships: 8.1 Men's Scholarships: 8.1

Number of Division II Swimming & Diving Programs:

Women's Programs: 96 Men's Programs: 71

NCAA Division II Schools also require students to meet Academic and Amateurism requirements for participation. The NCAA Division II requirements can be found at the following link: [NCAA Division II Toolkit](#)

The NCAA DII level requires that students obtain the credits in their core classes just like in Division I. (See DI Course Credit Chart above for examples.)

Division II Academic Eligibility

If you enroll in a Division II college and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year, you must:

Graduate from high school;

Complete these 16 core courses:

- 3 years of English
- 2 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
- 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school)
- 3 additional years of English, math, or natural or physical science
- 2 years of social science
- 4 years of additional core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, non-doctrinal religion or philosophy);

Earn a 2.000 grade-point average or better in your core courses; and earn a combined SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

In all cases students need to make sure they take care of their academics first!

Division III

NCAA Division III institutions are comprised primarily of small colleges and universities with enrollments that range from 250 - 23,000 students with an average school size of approximately 2350 undergraduate students. Division III institutions cannot offer athletic scholarships for student athletes. Financial Aid can be offered on a need based assessment only and primarily is in the form of academic scholarships, grants, and student loans.

Division III Recruiting Process

The recruiting process actively begins during your junior year. Many students may start to receive mailings and/or phone calls from college programs. While contact from colleges is flattering, do not allow recruiting to stop there. Make first contact yourself with schools that you would be interested in attending. Send letters to coaches and plan visits to campuses.

You should be aware that there are two types of visits involved in the recruiting process:

- **Unofficial (Non-Paid) Visits**-A student may visit a college campus at one's own expense an unlimited amount of times any time during high school.
- **Official (Paid) Visits**-A college may finance one visit to its campus for a prospective student-athlete during the student's senior year. Transportation, lodging, and meal costs may be covered.

Going through the recruiting process is a fun and exciting time. Make the most of the opportunity to sell yourself, meet new people, and travel to different college campuses.

Division III Timetable

The timetable below serves as a checklist to make sure you are well on your way to becoming a DIII student-athlete. As you start ninth-grade classes, you become a "prospective student-athlete." Unique from the DI and DII levels, DIII institutions can contact prospective recruits by phone or mail at any point in high school. If any coach or representative of the college's athletic interests (booster or representative) approaches you (or any member of your family) about enrolling and participating in athletics at that college, you then become a "re-recruited prospective student-athlete" at a particular college.

9th and 10th Grade:

Settle into the high school environment.

Go to class, do your homework, and develop good study habits. Your academic performance will be integral to college recruiting.

Play your sport at the highest level available, both with your school team and a club team.

Begin thinking about showcases and other opportunities to display your athletic ability to college coaches.

11th Grade:

Send out your first contact letter to college coaches. Be sure to include information about yourself and a copy of your team's schedule.

Ask your high school coach to write letters of recommendation to select college coaches on your behalf.

Register for and take the SAT/ACT.

Plan unofficial visits to schools this spring and summer.

Continue to play your sport at the highest level available, both with your school team and a club team.

Attend camps and showcases to display your talent.

KEEP UP THE HARD WORK ACADEMICALLY.

Important Note:

When a student-athlete has completed his/her junior year, college coaches can then make in-person, off-site contact.

12th Grade:

Apply to the colleges of your choice, where you will have the best opportunities for academic and athletic success.

Continue to play your sport at the highest level available, both with your school team and a club team.

Attend camps and showcases to display your talent.

Take advantage of official visits if presented with the opportunity.

FIGHT THE URGES OF SENIORITIS--KEEP UP THE HARD WORK ACADEMICALLY.

Number of Division III Swimming & Diving Programs:

Women's Programs: 254

Men's Programs: 221

[2015 -2016 NCAA Division III Fact and Figures](#)

Coaches and Student Athletes are held responsible for their student academic success at all NCAA Division levels . The NCAA maintains and posts an Academic Progress Rate for most NCAA Institutions which is a searchable database of schools, conferences and coaches and how they rate the progress of student athletes towards graduation.

[NCAA Academic Progress Rate Database](#)

NJCAA

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is the governing body of intercollegiate athletics for two-year colleges. As such, its programs are designed to meet the unique needs of a diverse group of student-athletes who come from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds and whose purpose in selecting a junior college may be as varied as their experiences before attending college. NJCAA may offer athletic scholarships for student athletes but are not required to do so. They also have three Divisions Similar to the NCAA.

Number of NJCAA Swimming Scholarships:

Women 15

Men 15

Number of NJCAA Swimming Programs:

Women 16

Men 16

National Junior College Athletic Association

[201-2016 NJCAA Student Athlete Information Guide](#)

[2015-2016 NJCAA Eligibility Pamphlet \(Full Guide\)](#)

NAIA

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, NAIA, is comprised of over 300 member institutions ranging in size from around 400-2500 students. Roughly 90% of all NAIA schools offer athletic scholarships. Students seeking to participate in athletics will need to be certified through the NAIA Clearinghouse which is similar to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

NAIA Eligibility

[Play NAIA.org](#)

[NAIA Eligibility Website Launch Page](#)

The NAIA Eligibility Center will determine your eligibility based on your academic record and additional information you provide. Here's how it works:

High School Students

If you will graduate from high school this spring and enroll in college this coming fall, the requirements are simple. High school graduation, plus **two out of three** of these requirements

1. ACHIEVE A MINIMUM OF 18 ON THE ACT OR 860 ON THE SAT.

2. ACHIEVE A MINIMUM OVERALL HIGH SCHOOL GPA OF 2.0 ON A 4.0 SCALE.

3. GRADUATE IN THE TOP HALF OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS.

Early Decisions for High School Seniors

Students who have completed their junior year of high school with an overall 3.00 GPA on a 4.00 scale, plus the minimum test scores required (18 ACT or 860 SAT), may receive an eligibility decision early in the senior year. To receive an early decision, register with the NAIA Eligibility Center, have your high school send official transcripts to the Eligibility Center and contact ACT or SAT to have their test scores sent directly (the NAIA code is 9876 with ACT and SAT).

Transfer Students

If you're [transferring from a two- or four-year college](#) and never played previously in the NAIA, the Eligibility Center will determine your eligibility based on academic records received directly from the previous institution(s).

Current NAIA Students Playing Sports for the First time

If you're a current NAIA student who has not previously competed in the NAIA, the Eligibility Center will determine your eligibility based on academic records received directly from your current institution and any previous institution(s) you've attended.

Have You Taken Time Off?

Some students will also need to provide more detailed information about their participation in sports outside the college setting. This information will be required if you:

- Graduated from high school and did not enroll in college full-time the following fall
- Did not maintain continuous enrollment in college (e.g., withdrew from college for one or more semesters)
- Did not participate in college sports for one or more years during your collegiate enrollment

NAIA Ongoing Eligibility Rules

For students already enrolled at NAIA institutions, your best resource for eligibility questions is your campus Faculty Athletics Representative. The [NAIA Official Handbook](#) outlines all association rules governing eligibility.

Any financial aid or assistance to prospective students, in money or in kind, except from members of the student's immediate family or from those upon whom the student is legally dependent, shall be administered by the institution under the policies and procedures established by the institution through the regularly constituted committee on student loans and scholarships.

A member institution of the NAIA shall award no more institutionally-controlled financial aid to a student-athlete than the actual cost of: 1) tuition; 2) mandatory fees, books and supplies required for courses in which the student-athlete is enrolled; 3) board and room for the student-athlete only, based on the official board and room allowance listed in the institution's catalog. Further financial assistance to a student-athlete, other than listed above, by a member institution shall be prohibited.

NAIA Swimming & Diving Programs
Men: 20 Women: 24
Scholarships
Men: 8 Women: 8

NAIA Website

[NAIA Clearinghouse](#)

Finding A College That's Right For You

There is a college swimming opportunity available for every swimmer who wishes to compete in college regardless of ability. A swimmer does not need to be the fastest recruit on the team or have national cuts in order to swim in college.

One of the most important things a student athlete should consider when looking at a college is not how good the swim team is, however, does the collegiate institution provide the student with the best education to meet the career interests of the student as well as provide an environment that will foster a student's academic, emotional, athletic, and spiritual growth. When a student athlete graduates from a collegiate institution will they have the skills necessary for success in our society today?

Top-Ten things that parents and student-athletes should consider when conducting a college search:

1. The institution academic rating. *The US News and World Report* publishes annual rankings of the best colleges across the United States based upon institution size, class sizes, degree programs offered, graduation rates, professors with Ph.D.'s, alumni support, rate of acceptance into post graduate schools, percentage of incoming freshman that graduate, percentage of students receiving financial assistance, and average SAT and ACT test scores of accepted students. Parents are highly encouraged to review the ranking of any institution their student athlete attends.

2. **Student Academics:** Does the student-athlete have the grades, course work, test scores, and skills necessary to be accepted into the institution as a non-student athlete? This is important to understand: if you are offered a college athletic scholarship, will the student-athlete be able to handle the college course work of your major and still be able to participate as a collegiate swimmer? A very large number of student-athletes have to drop out of college or lose their athletic scholarships because they failed to satisfactorily complete their required course-work.

3. **Size of the institution.** For many student athletes to find success in college they must consider the size of the school. " Size Does Matter." Are students going to be in large classes of 100 or more students where the professor will never know their name or will the feel more comfortable in school where the class sizes are at a very low ratio?

4. **Location:** Where is the institution located? Is the college in a small town, large city, suburb, close to an airport, close to home? How is the climate during the school year? Is the student athlete from San Antonio going to be able to adjust to life living in Fairbanks, Alaska?

5. **Degree programs:** Does the college provide a degree and major in a field of study that meets the students' interest. Does the college offer many majors? The vast majority of students' change their major at least once while in college.

6. **Social Life:** What kind of social life is available for students? Every college has some form of residential life office that offers students a wide variety of social and entertainment opportunities.

7. **Values:** Does the institution create an environment that meets your values? Does the institution meet your worship needs such as churches, synagogues, mosques etc? How well is the student-athlete prepared to handle people from different cultures, values, races, and gender orientation?

8. **Does the College Swimming Program meet the needs as a student athlete? Are you going to be the best on the team? If so, how do feel about that kind of pressure? Will you just be average swimmer member on team and if so what is the coaches' relationship with the average swimmer in the program? At what level does the program compete and will the athlete have an opportunity to be successful at that level.**

9. **What is the past history of the program? Is the team rebuilding or solid? How long have the coaches been at the school? How stable is the coaching staff in term of change? At what level does the program aspire to be? How many incoming first year students swim all four years of college and how many actually graduate?**

10. **What has been the relationship between the swimming program and college? Is it possible the program may be cut in the near future? Have members of the program had trouble with police or the college administration for failing to follow school policy? How is the teams overall G.P.A.?**

Recruiting

Some student athletes will be actively recruited by collegiate institutions. However, the vast majority of student athletes need to be prepared to sell themselves as a potentially valuable member of swimming team and student body of a collegiate institution. Don't worry if you are not actively recruited to swim. There are plenty of opportunities to compete and get a great education at the same time.

Here are some important things to do:

1. In order for an NCAA Division I or II program to actively recruit an athlete the athlete must have been cleared by the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). The NCAA requires that all prospective student athletes meet a base line educational requirement to be recruited. In a nutshell, your grades in your core classes and performance on national standardized tests do matter. The NCAA has developed a guide to help parents, student athletes and school administrators with the collegiate recruiting process including information on how to apply to the clearinghouse.

[NCAA Recruiting Information Link](#)

[NCAA Eligibility Center Brochure](#)

2 . Create a resume which includes your swimming best times, swimming accomplishments and academic awards, community service projects, clubs, hobbies. You should also include a bio of your competitive history in terms of your swimming background. How long have you been swimming? Are you a year round swimmer? Best events?

3. During the spring of your Junior year of high school you should meet with your HS Guidance Counselor to make sure you have completed the appropriate coursework to graduate on time and have taken the correct number of classes to be cleared through the NCAA Clearinghouse.

4. A swimmer should begin making a list of a schools that best fit the swimmers needs. Often this list can include dozens of schools. the hard part is narrowing your choice to between 5-10 schools to visit and apply to.

Academic versus Athletic Scholarships

[NCAA Handout on Scholarships and Financial Aid](#)

There is often a misconception in the college search process that if you are not recruited or have not been offered a scholarship you must not be very good. That view is completely false. The fact is that most colleges just do not have the finances available to offer every good swimmer a scholarship. Another fact is that most colleges do not find out a student-athlete is interested in their program until that student has made "First Contact". Many families assume that colleges are going to call them first. The reality is that most collegiate swimming programs do not have the manpower to search for athletes. Most coaches rely on meet results from large meets such as Sectionals or High School State, prospective student questionnaires, and through professional recruiters (not sports agents) whom student-athletes pay a fee to have them send information to schools about them.

With the scholarship limits that are imposed by the NCAA, most college coaches are going to be looking at a student's academic ability. The vast majority of swimming student athletes receives financial aid through academic related scholarships, grants and student loans, not through athletic scholarships.

Athletic Scholarship - An athletic scholarship is a one-year contract between you and a Division I or Division II institution. A school can reduce or cancel a scholarship if you become ineligible for competition, fraudulently misrepresent yourself, quit the team or engage in serious misconduct. During the contract year, a coach cannot reduce or cancel your scholarship on the basis of your athletic ability, performance, or injury. An institution may choose to not renew a scholarship at the end of the academic term provided they notify you in writing and provide you an opportunity for a hearing.

Remember a coach cannot offer you a "four year full-ride scholarship". They do not exist! Each student athlete award is reviewed annually. It is important to ask current collegiate swimmers if they are still on scholarship. Parents, it is not uncommon for a college program to offer and renew an athletic scholarship for the first 2-3 years of college and then ask the student to pay full tuition for the remainder of their college career.

National Letter of Intent - The National Letter of Intent (NLI) is administered by the Collegiate Commissioners Association (not the NCAA). When you sign the National Letter of Intent you agree to attend the institution with which you signed for one academic year in exchange for the institution awarding financial aid, including athletics aid, for one academic year.

Number of scholarships offered per team, per year, by Division:

Not all colleges that are eligible to offer scholarships will choose to do so. For example, Ivy League schools choose not to offer athletic scholarships.

Swimming is an equivalency sport which means all scholarships are NOT full scholarships, and coaches may divide the total number of scholarships allotted to them between as many athletes as they wish.

Swimming and diving share scholarship money which means that they have to divide up the scholarship amounts in both sports between them. Some swim teams choose not to have a diving team so that they can focus their scholarship money on swimmers.

Visiting Campus

One of the most important things a student should do is visit a college before deciding to attend. There are two general ways most students visit a college campus: Official Visits and Unofficial Visits.

Official Visits - You are limited to five official visits. On an official visit a school CAN pay for your transportation, lodging, and meals. The school can also pay for your parent's meals, and lodging. The school may also pay for their transportation provided you traveled by automobile. Institutions may also provide a student host with \$30 for entertainment (\$20 in Division III) within a 30 mile radius of campus and may also provide you with and your parents with complimentary admissions to a campus athletics event. Additional tickets may be reserved and purchased at face value by other family members accompanying you on a visit. They cannot provide you with gifts of any kind including photos, t-shirts, etc.

Unofficial Visits - A school may provide you with three complimentary admissions to a campus athletics event on an unofficial visit. A school cannot pay for your meals, lodging, or entertainment on an unofficial visit, although you are permitted to stay in student housing with a student-athlete by paying the regular institutional rate (which is frequently nothing for short-term guests).

Contacting Coaches

Once a student athlete has narrowed down the number of schools they are interested in they may decide to contact a swimming coach. One of the best ways to express your interest in a college program is to complete an athletic questionnaire. Most colleges have either downloadable or online request for information forms on their athletic websites. Most athletes begin completing athletic questionnaires during their sophomore and junior years in high school. Please be aware that college coaches have limitations as to how they may contact you.

Mail - With the exception of an athletic questionnaire and camp brochure, Division I and II schools cannot provide recruiting materials to you until September 1st at the start of your junior year. After that date, schools can send you general correspondence, attachments printed on white paper with black ink, business cards, wallet-size schedule card, and one media guide or recruiting brochure. Division I and II schools cannot send you recruiting or highlight videos, or CD-ROM's, though they may show them to you on campus. Division II has no such restrictions.

Phone Calls - Division I and II colleges and universities are prohibited from calling you prior to July 1st following the completion of a prospect's junior year. If you received a call prior to July 1st, that school violated the rules. After July 1st coaches may call you once per week. Exceptions to this limit are made a) during the five days prior to your official visit; b) the day of an in-person, off-campus contact; and c) subsequent to your national letter of intent signing. Calls may be made by most athletic staff, but not student-athletes. Division III has no such limits.

Electronic Contacts - E-mail and faxes are considered mail, so they are permissible to juniors. Instant Messenger, texting, social networks and similar services are considered telephone calls and limited to seniors.

Contacts and Evaluations - Any face-to-face meeting between a college coach and you or your parents, during which any of you say more than "hello" is a contact. If no contact is made between a coach and you or your parents, this is considered an evaluation. For all divisions, a college coach cannot contact you off-campus and in person until July 1 prior to your senior year. During the academic year Division I and II institutions are limited to seven permissible recruiting opportunities (contacts and evaluations) with you, not more than three of them may be in-person, off-campus contacts with you.

Contacts at a Meet - A coach may not speak with you at a meet until the conclusion of your final event and clearance from your high school or club coach. If the meet takes place over a number of days, college coaches will have to wait until the final day to speak with you. Also, unless the College Coach has his own competitors entered in a swim/dive meet that you are also competing in (USA Swimming or USA Diving Club Meets) they are not allowed on deck to speak or evaluate your performance.

Please note that many coaches do not have year-round contracts and they may not immediately respond to e-mail especially during the summer months. If you do not receive a response from a coach don't assume they are not interested. Feel free to send a second follow-up email.

Preparing For College Timeline

Junior Year

1. September: Register for the PSAT/NMSQT

About PSAT/NMSQT

The Preliminary SAT[®]/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a co-sponsored program by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC).

PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test[™]. It also gives you a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs.

The PSAT/NMSQT measures:

- critical reading skills
- math problem-solving skills
- writing skills

You have developed these skills over many years, both in and out of school. This test doesn't require you to recall specific facts from your classes.

The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are:

- to receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice.
- to see how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college.
- to enter the competition for scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (grade 11).
- to help prepare for the SAT. You can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.
- to receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service.

2. Sept-Oct Test date: Review

Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT (Links go directly to college board PSAT Practice Exam)

If you plan to take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall, pick up the Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT from your guidance office in September.

The Student Guide has three main sections:

1. Test taking help
2. Information about National Merit Scholarship Corporation scholarship competitions
3. A full-length practice test

Use the Student Guide to Do Your Best

- Review the section about scholarships with your parents.
- Practice now with sample critical reading, math, and writing skills questions.
- Get familiar with the instructions for each type of test question.
- Take the practice test like it's the real thing!

PSAT Prep

Spending your school years taking challenging academic courses and reading widely is the best way to get ready for the PSAT/NMSQT.

The PSAT/NMSQT includes the same types of critical reading, math, and writing skills multiple choice questions as the SAT® Reasoning Test.

Ready to give the questions a test run? Pick a section below, and you'll find tips and practice questions with answers and explanations for each type of question.

Critical Reading

Sentence Completion questions measure your knowledge of the meanings of words and ability to understand how the different parts of a sentence logically fit together. Practice now.

Passage-Based Reading questions measure your ability to read and think carefully about a single reading passage or a pair of related passages. Practice now.

Math

The math section of the PSAT/NMSQT requires a basic knowledge of number and operation; algebra and functions (though not content covered in third-year math classes--content that will appear on the new SAT); geometry and measurement; and data analysis, statistics, and probability. You can use a calculator to answer math questions, but no question on the test requires a calculator.

Multiple Choice questions ask you to decide which is the best of the five choices given. Practice now.

Grid-ins, or student-produced response questions, require you to solve a problem and enter your answer. Practice now.

Writing Skills

The multiple-choice questions on writing skills measure your ability to express ideas effectively in standard-written English, to recognize faults in usage and structure, and to use language with sensitivity to meaning.

Identifying Sentence Errors questions test your knowledge of grammar, usage, word choice, and idiom. You are required to find errors in sentences or indicate that there is no error. Practice now.

Improving Sentences questions ask you to choose the best, most effective form of an underlined portion of a given sentence. Practice now.

Improving Paragraphs questions require you to make choices about improving the logic, coherence, or organization in a flawed passage. Practice now.

Additional Information concerning the PSAT Exam can be found at www.collegeboard.com.

3. October- Take the PSAT and attend College Fair.

During the last two weeks of October most of the area school districts sponsor a college fair where admission office representatives from various colleges will be able to answer general questions about their school as well provide you with literature about what the college has to offer. Gather as much information as you can while attending this event. Get on as many college mailing lists as you can.

4. November-December: Review your PSAT Scores

Once you receive your scores review them and identify areas of weakness that you need to address/concentrate on in preparing for taking the SAT in May. Following the receipt of your scores sit with your guidance counselor and get the necessary information for signing up for the May SAT and sign up early so you can get your study guide for that test ASAP!

4. January-May SAT: Prepare for the SAT and plan to college visits.

Visit www.collegeboard.com for study guides and practice tests.

A. Make time to prepare for the exam. In January and February find 1-2 hours each week to focus on Increasing Vocabulary; Make 3 x 5 flash cards; buy a pocket dictionary; Increase reading of news articles and editorials. For example, spend time reading Time Magazine cover to cover and the Express-News Editorial Page, this will help improve vocabulary and aid in skill development for writing.

B. March-April, 8-10 weeks prior to test: Increase time review time to 2-4 hrs each week. Focus on writing skills. Know how to form paragraphs, proper structure of sentences, use of correct grammar and punctuation. Take an SAT Prep Course if possible. Utilize SAT study guides.

C. March: Spring Break-Plan a family trip to visit a few colleges you have an interest in. A great time for parents and students to get a feeling of a college campus. The vast majority of colleges offer tours year-round. Contact the school in advance about getting a tour of the school.

D. January-May: Research potential colleges. Start completing prospective student athlete forms online or mail them to the school as soon as possible.

5. May:

A. Study for Semester / Final Exams

B. Take the SAT and report your scores to colleges of interest.

C. Enroll in NCAA Clearinghouses

Enroll in the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse and the NCAA Amateurism Certification Clearinghouse (required for fall 2006). Your school will be required to submit official transcripts to the Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. Please follow-up with your counselors immediately following the last day of school to make sure transcripts are sent.

6. June - August

A. Find a summer job or internship/volunteer in a potential major field. Log as many community service hours as you can during the summer. This will become more important when applying to colleges and for scholarships.

B. Summer Training: Most Division I colleges will be looking to make decisions on whether to recruit you off the results of your Long Course season after your Junior year. If you are considered one of their top prospects the college coaches' goal will be to sign you in November.

C. Narrowing the field and visiting schools: From October-June you should start receiving mail from the various colleges. When mail arrives begin sorting the information into: Colleges of High Interest, Colleges of Moderate Interest, Colleges of Little Interest. Summer is great time to make visiting colleges a family vacation. However, try not to plan long trips away from training since most colleges coaches are looking at your Long Course performance as an indicator for recruiting. Try to narrow your schools of interest down to 10-12 schools and if possible try to visit about half of them during the summer.

Senior Year

1. August-September

A. Plan on retaking the SAT exam in November and adding the ACT exam in either November or February.

B. Review your previous test scores and work on areas that needed improvement.

2. September-October: College Matching

A. Compare your test scores, GPA, and class rank with the colleges of high interest acceptance rates.

B. Second look at your athletic performance/best times and do they mesh with needs of a college program.

C. Review for the SAT and ACT exams.

D. Conduct scholarship and financial aid searches.

E. Take Recruiting Trips

F. Complete early decision application: Some colleges programs will ask you to apply early decision meaning if you apply early decision and are accepted you are committing yourself to attending that school the following year.

3. October-December:

A. Complete college applications.

B. Recruiting trips.

C. November: Early signing period NCAA Div I athletic programs.

D. Begin applying for scholarships and grants

E. Parents start getting data for Federal Tax Return ready in order to apply for FAFSA program. FAFSA- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

You must fill out the FAFSA form in order to apply for federal and state student assistance. Many colleges and universities, especially public institutions, also require the FAFSA. The www.finaid.org website section on the FAFSA contains a database of the Title IV School Codes needed to complete the form as well as instructions and tips for filling it out. The section also links to a variety of government sites related to the FAFSA, such as FAFSA Express (a PC version of the form) and FAFSA on the Web (an interactive online version of the form).

4. January-February:

- A. Complete and apply for scholarships
- B. Parents submit and apply for FAFSA program.
- C. Last of Recruiting Trips.
- D. Take ACT exam if not taken in November.

5. Late February-Early April:

- A. Receive acceptance, rejection, and waiting list letters from colleges.
- B. Receive Financial Aid information from FAFSA and package offers from colleges.
- C. Make a decision on which college to attend.
- D. Apply for campus related scholarships and student loans if necessary.

6. May-June:

High School Graduation - Congratulations!

National Letter of Intent

The National Letter of Intent (NLI) is a voluntary program of commitment to typically a NCAA Division I or II institution. Currently there are roughly 650 NCAA Division I and II School that currently participate in the National Letter of Intent program. The program is strictly voluntary and no student-athlete, parent or school is required to sign a National Letter of Intent.

What is an NLI?

The NLI is a binding agreement between a prospective student-athlete and an NLI member institution.

- A prospective student-athlete agrees to attend the institution full-time for one academic year (two semesters or three quarters).
- The institution agrees to provide athletics financial aid for one academic year (two semesters or three quarters).

The penalty for not fulfilling the NLI agreement: A student-athlete has to serve one year in residence (full-time, two semesters or three quarters) at the next NLI member institution and lose one season of competition in all sports.

An important provision of the NLI program is a recruiting prohibition applied after a prospective student-athlete signs the NLI. This prohibition requires member institutions to cease recruitment of a prospective student-athlete once an NLI is signed with another institution.

Who does an NLI apply to?

This NLI applies only to prospective student-athletes who will be entering four-year institutions for the first time as full-time students.

If I am offered and NLI does it have to include the Financial Aid package?

Yes, at the time you sign an NLI, you must receive a written offer of athletics financial aid for the entire academic year from the institution named in the NLI documents. The offer must list the terms, conditions and amount of the athletics aid award.

How do I know if a school I'm interested in uses the NLI?

[National Letter of Intent Member List](#)

Need more information?

[National Letter of Intent Website](#)

[2016-2017 NLI Signing Dates](#)

Useful Links and Documents

These are links to collegiate-related Web Sites, etc.

They are diverse and therefore uncategorized and arranged in a random fashion

Some are duplicates of those found elsewhere in the document

Some may no longer be active

www.collegeboard.com

www.act.org

[Colleges in Texas](#)

[Loan Calculator](#)

www.collegesofdistinction.com/

www.mycollegeguide.org/

www.collegelink.com/

www.usnews.com

www.degreeedirectory.org

www.lunch-money.com

www.vault.com

matchcollege.com

www.xap.com/

www.allaboutcollege.com/

www.ed.gov/index.jhtml

[College Savings Plans](#)

[Varsity Tutors - Practice Tests](#)

[Accreditation and On line Colleges](#)

www.collegefortexans.com

www.ncaa.org

www.naia.org

www.njcaa.org

www.berecruited.com

www.collegeswimming.com

www.utsystem.edu

www.finaid.org

www.savingforcollege.com

www.collegeapps.com

www.fastweb.com

www.gocollege.com

www.simpleretuition.com

www.nchelp.org/

www.campustours.com/

www.naicu.edu/

www.withmydegree.org

<http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/>

www.actstudent.org

www.4tests.com

www.number2.com

www.barronstestprep.com

www.powerprep.com

www.kaptest.com

www.testprepreview.com

www.princetonreview.com

www.how-to-study.com/

www.varsityedge.com/

[learning strategies](#)

[Study Skills](#)

[College Atlas](#)

www.beeducated.com

www.fafsa.ed.gov/

[Student Scholarship Search](#)

[College Savings Plans](#)

[Return to the Top of This Document](#)