Basics of Eligibility — NAIA Legislative Services

Topics

- Eligibility Center
- Freshman Eligibility
- Continuing Eligibility
- Seasons of Competition
- Transfer Students
- Amateurism
- Eligibility Forms

NAIA Eligibility Center

- All first-time NAIA participants must register at www.PlayNAIA.org and receive an Eligibility Center determination.
- Must receive determination prior to participating in any contest (scrimmage, exhibition or regular season).
- Update your short lists with regularity.
- Encourage students to submit transcripts and applicable test scores as soon as possible.
Eligibility Basics

An NAIA student:

- May compete during his/her first 10 semesters/15 quarters only
- Must meet freshman and/or continuing eligibility requirements
- Must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours
- Must be making normal progress toward a baccalaureate degree
- Must have a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale (for juniors and seniors, athletically or academically)
- Must meet transfer eligibility requirements (if applicable)
- May compete during four seasons only

Terms of Attendance

An NAIA student may only compete during the first 10 semesters/15 quarters of full-time enrollment.

- Any term (excluding summer sessions) in which the student becomes identified will be considered a term of attendance.
- Exceptions: V.E. 1a-b
  - Pregnancy
  - Debilitating illness

Identification

A student identifies with an institution if:

- Competes in a contest
  - Charged with season
  - Charged with term

- Is enrolled in 12 hours and attends one class while being enrolled in 12 hours
  - Charged with term

Upon identification the term immediately counts as one of the student’s 10 semesters or 15 quarters.
Freshman Eligibility

Freshman: A student who has not been previously identified at any institution of higher learning for 2 semesters/3 quarters.

To be eligible for competition, a freshman must be:

- Graduate of accredited high school or be accepted as regular student in good standing, AND
- Meet two of three requirements:

  - Test Score
    - Minimum score of:
    - ACT — 18
    - SAT — 860 (Critical Reading and Math Sections only)
  - High School GPA
    - Minimum overall high school GPA of 2.000 on 4.000 scale
  - Class Rank
    - Top 50% of high school graduating class

International Students

- Must meet 2 of 3 requirement, but those requirements are calculated differently than domestic students
- Academic records required will vary per country

GPA

- Multiple variations of GPA
  - GPA used to determine class rank
    - If multiple ranks, use rank used to determine valedictorian
    - If no valedictorian, use weighted over unweighted
    - If don’t rank:
      - Academic vs. Overall GPA
      - Use Overall GPA: Academic GPA does not include activity or elective classes
Class Rank
- Multiple variations of class rank
- Rank used to determine valedictorian
- No class rank given
- Can accept a letter from the principal/head master certifying student graduated in top 50%

Home-Schooled Students
- Home-schooled students must meet both:
  - State certificate
  - Minimum test scores: 18 ACT / 860 SAT
  - Exception
    - Elevated test scores: 20 ACT / 950 SAT
- Request for Exception
  - ACT/SAT results, including subsection scores
  - Any college coursework
  - Home School transcripts
  - Student’s schedule at NAIA institution

Learning Disabilities
Information required for Learning Disability exception:
- Student’s diagnosis
- IEP or 504 plan, if applicable
- ACT/SAT results, including subsection scores
- Accommodations institution commits to make for this student, particularized to student’s specific disability and needs
- All transcripts
Basics of Eligibility — NAIA Legislative Services

### 2nd Term Freshmen

9 Hour Rule
- Student must meet entering freshman requirements (2 of 3)
- Student must also have passed at least 9 hours prior to the second term
- Can’t count pre-identification hours

### Continuing Eligibility

Applies to any student who has previously identified for 2 semesters/3 quarters
To be eligible for competition, must meet:
- 12 Hour Rule
- 24/36 Hour Rule
  - AND if applicable
- Progress Rule
- 2.0 GPA for Juniors

### Continuing Eligibility

12 Hour Rule
- To compete, a student must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 institutional credit hours.
  - At least 9 hours must be at the NAIA institution
  - Maximum 3 hours may be from another institution (with prior permission from registrar)
- If a student drops below 12 hours at any time, student must immediately stop competing.
Continuing Eligibility

24/36 Hour Rule

- To compete, a student must have earned:
  - 24 hours during the student’s previous two semesters, or
  - 36 hours during the student’s previous three quarters

Includes:

- Up to 12 non-term hours
- Any non-term hours must be earned after the student’s 2nd most recent term

---

Continuing Eligibility

24/36 Exceptions

- **Student participation and withdrawal** from institution prior to start of academic term (Note: Progress Rule still applies)
- **Junior College transfer** who needed less than 24 hours during last two semesters to get associate’s degree:
  - Identified in no more than five semesters
  - Passed all hours during term in which degree was earned
- **First term of collegiate competition:**
  - If in first 4 semesters:
    - Must meet freshman eligibility rules
  - If in semesters 5+:
    - 2.0 GPA in all courses attempted at all institutions
Continuing Eligibility

Repeat Classes
- Repeat courses previously passed with a “D” or better in any term, (including summer, non-term) cannot count towards 24/36 hour rule.
  - Excludes:
    - Failed classes
    - Classes student did not receive any credit for
    - Repeat: sufficiently similar in content and description
    - Course catalog description and registrars on campus
    - Structure, credits awarded, supplementary components, for majors or non-majors, where the course is in the sequence
  - One repeat course/term previously passed with a “D” may be counted towards 12 hour enrollment rule.

Article V, Section C, Item 12

Progress Rule

A student must have earned:
- 2nd SOC: 24 semester hrs
- 3rd SOC: 48 semester hrs
- 4th SOC: 72 semester hrs
- At least 48 semester/ 72 quarter hours must be general education and/or in the student’s field of study

2.0 GPA for Juniors

For a student to participate after attaining junior status (academically or athletically):
Must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale
Continuing Eligibility

Calculating GPA
- First TOA at your institution: cumulative GPA from all transcripts
  \[ \text{Cum GPA} = \frac{\text{Total Quality Points achieved}}{\text{Total GPA Hrs attempted}} \]
- After initial TOA at your institution: use institution's cumulative GPA policy for all students
  - Retention/Graduation GPA is only used if it is the only GPA
  - If multiple "cumulative GPAs" appear, use whichever GPA institution uses to determine honors, graduation, etc.

Fix Continuing Eligibility

Putting it All Together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What an FAR should be on the lookout for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th academic</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>season</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd academic</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>season</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd academic</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>season</td>
<td>9 hours prior to 2nd semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st academic</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>season</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd season of</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd season of</td>
<td>48 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st season of</td>
<td>72 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seasons of Competition

A student may compete in 4 seasons of competition in any sport
Includes:
- Intercollegiate competition
  - Varsity, JV or Freshman
  - Transfer students' SOC are determined by previous association
  - Non-intercollegiate "elite level" competition
- Can include collegiate club play
- Does not include U19 leagues
**Seasons of Competition**

A student is charged with a season of competition for any participation in an exhibition or contest.

Includes:
- One pitch
- One play
- One second

**Competitive Experience**

**Countable Competition**

- Additional SOCs must be charged for each year after high school graduation in which a student does not play college sports and participates in NAIA-level “countable” competition.
- FAR should review the student’s competitive experience on the Competitive Experience Form.
- Cannot be charged more than 1 SOC in 12-month period for outside competition.
- When to use the Competitive Experience Form:
  - Student has a break in continuous NAIA enrollment.

**Directory of Competition**

- Check the Directory of Competition within PlayNAIA Manager to see if a league/event is countable. Directory is not exhaustive.
Competitive Experience

Competitive Experience Review

Additional Steps:

- Interview the student thoroughly
- Teams played on
- Contact information for coach
- Internet search
- Involvement on a team or league
- Contact information for coach/league director
- Bylaws or published policies on leagues/clubs
- Apply the Evaluative Criteria to any league, team or event

Transfers

Students who identified previously at any other collegiate institution

- If came from a four-year institution and played
  - 16-week residency required
- If attended only two-year institutions before
  - No residency period
- Never competed at the immediately previous four-year institution
  - No residency period
- If previous four-year institution provides “release” and has a 2.0 GPA
  - No residency period
- If within an NAIA conference
  - Conference rules may apply

Continued

- Can be charged 2 SOCs in 12-month period
  - Student who represents 2 institutions in one academic year
  - JuCo Exception: JuCo grad who participated at JuCO, transfers to NAIA school in same sport season and is otherwise eligible
- Mid-Year transfers and Spring events
  - Student must be certified as eligible to participate
- Applies even for spring scrimmages, where student won’t be charged a SOC
### Recertification

- Any student-athlete certified as eligible in the fall semester must be recertified if the student will participate in the winter (quarter only) or spring terms.
- Student-athletes must be properly recertified by mid-night on the 21st day after the official close of the previous term.
- A student-athlete must stop participating immediately upon discovering the student no longer meets continuing eligibility requirements.

### Amateur Status

- Amateurism is sport specific
- **Except** if the student is professional in:
  - Cross Country
  - Indoor Track & Field
  - Outdoor Track & Field
  - Indoor or Arena Football
  - Indoor Soccer

### Acts that result in a loss of amateur standing:

- Cash awards
- Sign contract with any pro team
- Remuneration for use of name and picture
- Reimbursement over actual expense amount
- Participating in any athletics contest where remuneration exceeds actual expenses of travel, meals and lodging only
- Agreeing to compete in professional athletics, with either pro sports organization or with those authorized to represent the athlete
Amateur Status

Examples
- Playing with an amateur team against a pro team
- Trying out for a pro team
- Submitting highlight video to win a contest with a cash prize
- Competing in ITF events, earning a cash prize, but not accepting the prize and completing amateurism forms

Medical Hardship Waivers

- Medical hardships restore a student’s season of competition when the student sustains a season-ending injury or illness.
- Must be verified by a medical doctor treating the student.
- Student must not have competed in more than the permissible number of contests.
- Injury cannot occur in the last regular season contest or postseason.
- Restores a season of competition but does not restore any terms toward the 10 semester/15 quarter rule.

Hardship Waiver Forms

- Coach / AD / FAR must complete portions 1-4
- Transcript is required
- Competition dates – be prepared to submit verifying stats
- Signatures
Basics of Eligibility — NAIA Legislative Services

Hardship Waiver Forms

- Doctor (M.D. or D.O only) must complete portion 5
- Answer and initial all questions
- Date for return must be given – must be at least specific to the month
- Signature

Certification of Eligibility Forms

Required:
- NAIA Official Eligibility Certificate
- NAIA Certificate of Clearance

When applicable:
- Transfer Eligibility Statement
- Eligibility Certificate for Entering Freshmen
- Competitive Experience Form

Students may not compete until all necessary forms are completed and sent to conference eligibility chair.

Forms

Self Report Violation

Exception Request

Send to:
Conference Eligibility Chair

Appeal of Previous Ruling

Send to:
National Office
Basics of Eligibility — NAIA Legislative Services

Resources

- NAIA.org
- PlayNAIA.org
- NAIAHelp.com