



MEMBERSHIP BASICS

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Active membership in the NAIA is open to four-year colleges and universities and upper-level, two-year institutions in the United States and Canada that award the bachelor's (baccalaureate) degree, or its equivalent.

Institutions in the U.S. must be fully accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies; Canadian institutions must have accreditation from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Associate membership is accorded to institutions that meet the criteria but do not hold full membership in one of the accrediting bodies or to institutions that hold full accreditation but are classified as developing athletic programs.

SPORTS SPONSORSHIP

NAIA institutions must sponsor a minimum of six NAIA championship sports no later than the beginning of the fourth full academic year of active NAIA membership.

Single-gender institutions must sponsor a minimum of three NAIA championship sports no later than the beginning of the fourth full academic year of active NAIA membership. Affiliated NAIA conferences often have more strict sponsorship requirements.

Institutions in the process of building sports programs have the option of sponsoring an intercollegiate sport and opting out of NAIA championships on a year-by-year basis. This affords the institution scheduling advantages and requires application of NAIA rules for participating student-athletes in that sport.

MEMBERSHIP COSTS

The NAIA has a one-time membership application fee.

Annual costs for NAIA membership include membership dues, conference membership or independent dues, statistical software fees, student-athlete drug education fees and required catastrophic injury insurance. (The NAIA's catastrophic injury insurance program is administered by Ascension Benefits and Insurance Solutions; premiums vary annually and by sport.)

ATHLETIC GRANTS

The NAIA has maximum institutional aid limits for each varsity sport. Some or all institutional aid awarded to individual student-athletes may be exempted based on their academic performance. Limits do not apply to junior varsity teams.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Playing rules for each sport may stipulate facility or playing field dimensions or standards. The membership evaluation process may take into consideration the quality of current athletics facilities and feasibility of planned improvements.

CONFERENCES

The NAIA has 21 conferences including the Association of Independent Institutions. Conference membership offers scheduling benefits, cost-effective post season opportunities and an environment to build relationships and rivalries with other institutions. It is recommended that prospective members engage in a discussion with potential conferences.

NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

All first-time NAIA student-athletes must register with the NAIA Eligibility Center to have their academic and athletic eligibility determined. Ongoing eligibility is managed at the institution.

MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

Applications are considered once a year and must be received in the NAIA National Office by October 1.

If a campus visit is approved by the NAIA membership committee, the final evaluation and recommendation is presented to the Council of Presidents at its annual meeting the following April.

If accepted, membership begins July 1; however, a one-year waiting period is required before new members are eligible for championships selection.