Thank you for working with us to help prepare your student-athletes for the rigors of college academics. You play an integral role in the initial certification process for your college-bound student-athletes, which means the relationship between your high school and the NCAA Eligibility Center is very important. hope this resource guide will assist you, specifically with the creation and maintenance of your school’s list of approved core courses, as well as answer many of your questions.

What is the NCAA Eligibility Center?
The NCAA Eligibility Center took over operations for the former NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse in November 2007. The Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateurism credentials of all students who want to play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution as freshmen. In order to practice, play and receive an athletic scholarship, students need to meet certain academic benchmarks. An additional certification process exists to make sure the student is still an amateur, which is necessary in order for the student to compete.

What is the High School’s Responsibility?
It is the responsibility of your school to be sure your list of NCAA-approved core courses is up to date, so that your college-bound student-athletes can appropriately plan their academic path in high school to meet NCAA initial-eligibility requirements. You will be able to provide information to your student-athletes and their parents regarding the initial-eligibility requirements and make your list readily available to them. We’ve included a number of documents in this resource guide that you can pass along to your students and their parents.

What is the High School Student-Athlete’s Responsibility?
It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to appropriately plan their academic path in high school to meet the initial-eligibility requirements with the Eligibility Center. They alone are responsible for achieving and protecting their eligibility status!

REMEMBER:

All courses are not “created” equal;
Only certain courses “count” as NCAA Approved Core Courses

English as a Second Language
ESL (also referred to as ELD, ELL, LEP, SDAIE, SOL, ESOL) courses may be submitted for inclusion on your list, EXCEPT in the area of English. NCAA policy permits the acceptance of ESL courses taught in disciplines other than English (e.g., social studies) to satisfy the core-course requirements, provided they are qualitatively and quantitatively the same as an NCAA-approved core course in the regular course offerings. NCAA rules stipulate that students who have taken advanced ESL English courses must have their eligibility determined through the initial-eligibility waiver process.
Online, independent study, correspondence courses
Nontraditional courses, such as online, independent study, and correspondence courses may count as core courses if the following conditions are met:

- The course meets core-course requirements;
- The student and the instructor have access to each other during the course so that the instructor can teach, evaluate and provide assistance to the student;
- Appropriate academic authorities evaluate the student’s work according to the high school’s academic policies; and
- The course is acceptable for any student to take and is placed on the student’s “home” or “host” high school transcript.

Should we place “nontraditional” courses on our high school’s list?

Ask yourself who “owns” the curriculum. If the student takes the course through another entity, with curriculum designed and delivered by another entity, then it is THAT program that needs to have the course on its list of approved core courses.

Duplicative Courses
If a student takes two or more courses with different course titles but with course content that is not significantly different, the student will not receive credit for more than one of the courses for NCAA purposes, even though each course independently is an acceptable core course. Please review your list of approved core courses to alert students of any potential duplications.

One-Year Course Taught Over Two Years
A one-year course taken over a two-year period (or other extended period of time) will be considered the equivalent of a one-year course and will be given a maximum of only one credit for core-course requirements.

Credit Recovery
If your high school offers credit recovery for students who have previously failed a course, you need to make sure the following conditions are met:

- You must follow your credit recovery policies, whether the student is an athlete or not. The Eligibility Center may request your policy if necessary.
- The credit recovery course must be comparable, both qualitatively and quantitatively to the regular course. The credit recovery course must meet the NCAA legislated definition of a core course. The credit recovery course should be noted as such on the transcript.

What is a core course?

- An academic course that receives high school graduation credit in one or a combination of these areas: English, mathematics, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, nondoctrinal/comparative religion or philosophy;
- Four-year college preparatory;
- At or above your high school’s regular academic level;
- Algebra I or higher in the math area;
- Taught by a qualified instructor
What is NOT a core course?

- Courses in non-core areas or vocational courses like Driver’s Ed, Keyboarding, Art, Music, Physical Education, Welding.
- Courses that prepare students for the world of work or life, or for a two-year college or technical school. Examples include Personal Finance, Consumer Education, Tech Prep.
- Courses that are taught below grade level, at a slower pace, with less rigor or depth. Examples include Basic, Essential, Fundamental or Foundations courses.
- Courses that are not academic in nature. Examples include Film Study, Video Editing, Greenhouse Management.

Courses taken in the 8th grade

A high school course (e.g., Algebra 1, Spanish 1) taken in the eighth grade may be used if the course is on the student’s high school transcript with a grade and credit and if the course is on the high school's List of NCAA-Approved Core Courses.

College Courses/Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

College courses may be used to satisfy core-curriculum requirements if the courses are accepted and awarded credit by the high school for any student and meet all other requirements for core courses. For NCAA Division I only, college courses must be placed on the student's high school transcript.

Should College Courses be Placed on My Core-Course List?

Courses taken at a college should NOT be submitted to be included on your high school’s List of Approved Core Courses. College courses should only be submitted for inclusion on your high school's list if those courses are taught at your high school.

Credit By Exam

Courses completed through credit-by-exam will not be used.

CORE COURSE INFORMATION

In order to make the core-course submission process as efficient as possible for your school please remember the following:

- Update your list of approved core courses annually, once your course offerings have been approved for the upcoming academic year.
- If submitted courses are placed on hold pending additional information, send that information expeditiously.
- Sign up for our E-Newsletter. If you would like to subscribe to the Eligibility Center's high school newsletter, please send an e-mail to: ec-clientrelations@NCAA.org with the subject line "subscribe."

Questions?

Call us on the Toll Free Line for High School
Administrators at 877/622-2321 or

Visit the Eligibility Center Web site at www.eligibilitycenter.org