



# APPLICATION DEADLINES & PROCESSES

The recruiting process is overwhelming. With so much to think about and accomplish; from setting up an athletic profile to attending recruiting events and making sure the right coaches evaluate your performances, it is easy to forget the fact that you actually have to apply to college. If you're not organized and miss important deadlines, there's no real safety net. It's up to you to manage your time wisely so you can sign on the dotted line and begin your college athletic career.

**There are seven main parts to the application process:**

1. Registering for and taking the ACT and SAT
2. Registering with the NCAA Eligibility Center (for DI and DII) and/or the NAIA Eligibility Center
3. Filling out and sending in college applications
4. Submitting your FAFSA paperwork
5. Requesting your final amateurism certification
6. Sending your final transcripts and proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center(s)
7. Signing the acceptance letter

## **ACT and SAT registration and test dates**

Underclassman, should be taking prep courses and the PSAT and/or plan to prepare for the ACT/SAT. By your junior year, you should register for and take both the ACT and SAT tests. The ACT is given six times per year: September, October, December, February, April and June. The SAT is given seven times per year: October, November, December, January, March (or April), May and June.



Registration for each test date usually opens about a month before. You can take the ACT up to 12 times and the SAT as many times as you want.

**Insider tip:** Fee waivers are available for economically disadvantaged students for both the ACT and SAT. You can use fee waivers up to two times for each test.

## The NCAA and NAIA Eligibility Center registration

If your intention is to compete at the Division I or Division II levels, register for a Certification Account with the [NCAA Eligibility Center \(formerly the Clearinghouse\)](#) and/or the [NAIA Eligibility Center](#) by the summer after your junior year. Student-athletes who will play Division III can create a Profile Page in the NCAA Eligibility Center to receive updates relevant to their needs.

**Insider tip:** If you aren't sure which division you will compete in should start with a Profile Page and move to a Certification Account if they end up doing Division I or Division II.

The NCAA Eligibility Center looks at your high school core courses, your core GPA for those courses and your ACT/SAT test scores to determine eligibility. Your official scores have to be sent directly from the testing agencies, so use code "9999" for NCAA and "9876" for NAIA when you request those scores. It's important to register by your junior year so you can go on an [official visit](#).

## College applications: when to apply

Usually the summer before your senior year, you should have your **target list of schools** narrowed down. You can apply to as many colleges as you'd like, but keep in mind that there are application fees involved and filling out the forms can be time consuming. Every college has different deadlines for their admissions process, so make sure you have a method for organizing those important dates. A good practice is to create a spreadsheet or calendar so you can stay on top of the various timelines.

**Insider tip:** Student-athletes should consider using the [Common Application](#), which allows you to send multiple schools the same application information at once. It's a huge time-saver.



**You have three application choices: apply for an early decision; choose a rolling decision option; or apply as part of the regular decision process.** Each of these options has different deadlines. Most student-athletes choose to apply as part of the regular decision, so they have more time to make a final decision on the program they are most interested in and/or get their test scores up.

Early decision applications are usually due around November 1 of your senior year, while most regular decision applications aren't due until January 1. However, with early decision applications, student-athletes are bound to applying to only one college. This choice is a personal one based on your circumstances.

### **Early action vs. early decision**

When it comes to applying to college, an early action or early decision application offer less competition than a regular application for getting admitted at an early stage. These early applications mostly benefit those who have done their research ahead of time and have narrowed down their choices to the college they want to attend.

The main difference between the two applications is that an early decision application is binding and the applicant must attend the school if they are accepted. An early action application is not binding but can offer the applicant ease of mind with knowing that they've been accepted (or not) at an earlier date. Sort of like a back-up plan.

### **Should you apply early decision?**

Getting accepted early does offer some benefits, including saving on the cost of submitting multiple applications, reducing stress, time spent waiting on a decision, and having more time to prepare for moving to college. Studies have shown that early decision applicants get accepted at a higher rate than regular applicants. Plus, if not accepted, early applicants also have more time to form a back-up plan.



This can be especially appealing for student-athletes who have done their college research and have settled on a first-choice school that fits them athletically, academically, socially, and financially. Applying early may not be a good decision for someone who is not 100% sure they want to attend that college, has not done a lot of research into colleges or may need to bring their grades up their final semester.

## **Understanding the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

While a full-ride scholarship to the school of your dreams is what every student-athlete wants, the reality is that only 2 percent of high school athletes are awarded athletic scholarships, and an even smaller percentage of that receive full rides. There are **NO ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS** at the DIVISION III level.

In order to receive financial aid, students must complete the [Free Application for Federal Students \(FAFSA\)](#).

**To fill it out, here is what you'll need for yourself and from your parents, if you are a dependent:**

- Social Security Number
- Alien Registration Number (if you aren't a U.S. citizen)
- Most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s and other record of money earned
- Bank statements and record of investments
- Records of untaxed income
- An FSA ID to sign electronically

**There are three deadlines to be aware of regarding submitting your FAFSA:**

- **College deadline:** The college deadline for FAFSA is usually earlier than the other two. It varies depending on your school, but can be as early as October 1 of your

senior year. Most colleges will mark this date clearly on their financial aid web pages.

- **State deadline:** The state deadline varies by state, but they are mostly “priority deadlines,” which means they suggest you submit as soon as possible to make sure you get “priority” consideration of aid. These tend to closely coincide with college deadlines.
- **Federal deadline:** This is a low-pressure deadline, as you have until June 30 of your freshman year in college to apply. Adhere to your college deadline to put yourself in the position to get the most aid possible.

If you miss the college or state deadline for FAFSA, you are not likely to receive much financial aid. If you miss the federal deadline, you’re out of luck for that year. However, you can submit for the next year.

## **NCAA Amateurism Certificate**

Starting April 1 of your senior year, you must request your final amateurism certificate if you plan to play in a DI or DII institution. To be eligible to compete and receive a scholarship with the NCAA, you have to **meet certain requirements**. You have likely already registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center during your junior year, but you must update the information in your senior year in order to become certified and cleared to play.

## **Final transcripts and proof of graduation**

After you graduate high school, you must prove to the NCAA that you’ve done so. The best way is to have transcripts sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center with your graduation date included. If you can’t provide a transcript with the graduation date included, an administrator at your high school can sign a proof of graduation and fax it to the Eligibility Center.



## Acceptance letter

*Nothing is official until you receive an acceptance letter.* Even then, you must formally accept. Each school has its own deadline for when you must accept, so make sure you note that when you receive your letter. If you don't let them know you intend to come, they will offer your spot up to someone else. You've done all the hard work, don't let this be the one step that keeps it from becoming official.

