



## NCAA Eligibility Center COVID-19 Response FAQs

Given the unprecedented events during Spring/Summer 2020 due to COVID-19, the NCAA Eligibility Center has partnered with the NCAA membership to identify the following changes to the initial-eligibility certification process. While most of the policy changes are specific to expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates (as determined by the start of year nine), some policies will apply to subsequent classes as well. (This version includes updates posted May 28 **in yellow**.)

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### Relief Provided – Automatic Waiver Criteria

**Q1:** Given the unique circumstances and cancellations due to COVID-19, will there be any flexibility in the initial-eligibility standard for students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date (as determined by the start of year nine)?

**A1:** Students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date will receive an automatic initial-eligibility waiver (athletics aid, practice and competition) in the academic certification process, provided they:

#### Division I\*

- Meet the core-course progression requirement (10/7) before start of the seventh semester; and
- Present a 2.300 or higher core-course GPA in such courses.

#### Division II\*

- Complete 10 core-course units before start of the seventh semester; and
- Present a 2.200 or higher core-course GPA in such courses.

\*Note: Due to recent ACT/SAT cancellations, test scores are excluded from these criteria.

**Q1a:** What if a student does not meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria?

**A1a:** If a student presents 10 core-course units prior to the start of the seventh semester and has at least a 2.0 GPA in those courses, they will receive a partially-approved waiver providing the benefits of Academic Redshirt (DI) and Partial Qualifier (DII) status at the time of final certification [initial application June 1]. If neither set of COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria is met, the student should continue to work toward meeting legislated [Division I or II initial-eligibility requirements](#) and submit all transcripts, test scores and proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center.

**Q1b:** Which students are eligible to receive the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver?

**A1b:** The COVID-19 Automatic Waiver only applies to students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date (as determined by the start of year nine). This does *not include* (a) juniors (expected 2021 graduates based on starting grade nine in Fall 2017) who reclassify and graduate in 2020 *or* (b) students with an expected graduation date in 2019 or prior (based on starting year nine before Fall 2016).

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**Q2:** If students meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria but do not meet Qualifier requirements based on their complete academic record (including year 12), will they still receive the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver?

**A2:** Yes. The COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria is based solely on the student's pre-seventh semester academic record and applies to all expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates.

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**Q3:** If students meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria but also have a non-qualifying test score in their Eligibility Center account, will they still receive the automatic waiver?

**A3:** Yes. The COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria excludes test scores from the analysis and applies to all expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates.

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**Q4:** Will international students be eligible for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver?

**A4:** For Divisions I and II, students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date who present *solely international academic credentials* will receive the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver (athletics aid, practice and competition) in the academic certification process if they meet the following criteria:

- Complete at least 10 core-course units before start of the seventh semester; and
  - Present a 2.300 (DI)/2.200 (DII) or higher core-course GPA in such courses.
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**Q5:** Will students who present three years of solely international academic credentials and then begin completing U.S.-based curriculum in grade 12 be held to the 10/7 requirement (Division I) for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver?

**A5:** No. Students who present *solely international academic credentials* before starting the seventh semester will be exempt from the 10/7 requirement for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver analysis. Students who present *U.S.-based and international academic credentials* before starting the seventh semester will be held to the 10/7 requirement for this analysis.

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**Q6:** How will this automatic waiver appear in the student's Eligibility Center account?

**A6:** **For student-athletes who qualify for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver**, the student's Eligibility Center account will show "Final Nonqualifier" status with "COVID-19 Automatic Waiver Approved" in the Academic Status field, as shown in the example student account below:

<b>DIVISION I</b> Academic Status Final Nonqualifier  (COVID-19 Automatic Waiver Approved)	Amateur Status Pending Review	<b>DIVISION II</b> Academic Status Final Nonqualifier  (COVID-19 Automatic Waiver Approved)	Amateur Status Pending Review
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<b>DIVISION I ACADEMIC STATUS</b> <b>Final Nonqualifier</b>  COVID-19 Automatic Waiver Approved  You are immediately eligible to receive athletics aid, practice and compete. Contact your institution's Compliance Department for details.	<b>DIVISION II ACADEMIC STATUS</b> <b>Final Nonqualifier</b>  COVID-19 Automatic Waiver Approved  You are immediately eligible to receive athletics aid, practice and compete. Contact your institution's Compliance Department for details.
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**For student-athletes who do not qualify for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver**, but qualify for a partially-approved waiver providing the benefits of Academic Redshirt (DI) and Partial Qualifier (DII) status, the student's Eligibility Center account will show "Final Nonqualifier" status with "Partial COVID-19 Waiver – Aid: 1st yr & Practice: 1st term" for DI and "Partial COVID-19 Waiver – Athletics Aid and Practice" for DII in the Academic Status field, as shown in the example student account below:

<b>DIVISION I</b> Academic Status Final Nonqualifier  (Partial COVID-19 Waiver - Aid: 1st yr & Practice: 1st term)	Amateur Status Preliminary Certified	<b>DIVISION II</b> Academic Status Final Nonqualifier  (Partial COVID-19 Waiver - Athletics Aid and Practice)	Amateur Status Preliminary Certified
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<b>DIVISION I ACADEMIC STATUS</b> <b>Final Nonqualifier</b>  Partial COVID-19 Waiver - Aid: 1st yr & Practice: 1st term  You are immediately eligible to receive athletics aid in your first year and practice in your first term of full-time enrollment. Contact your institution's Compliance Department for details.	<b>DIVISION II ACADEMIC STATUS</b> <b>Final Nonqualifier</b>  Partial COVID-19 Waiver - Athletics Aid and Practice  You are immediately eligible to receive athletics aid and practice in your first year of full-time enrollment. Contact your institution's Compliance Department for details.
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**Q7:** Will homeschool students be eligible for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver?

**A7:** Yes.

## Timing

**Q8:** When will the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver relief be provided?

**A8:** The COVID-19 Automatic Waiver may be provided at any time the student-athlete's Eligibility Center account is evaluated, either via a preliminary or final certification. Proof of graduation is not required to receive this automatic waiver. We are targeting May 1 to begin applying the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria.

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**Q9:** Will students who have already received a preliminary evaluation be re-evaluated to determine if they meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria?

**A9:** Yes. Once programming is complete, the Eligibility Center will apply the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria to students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date who have already received a preliminary evaluation. We are targeting May 1 to begin applying the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria.

## Submission of Academic Documents

**Q10:** Due to international mail disruptions and school closures, will there be any flexibility in requiring official academic documents?

**A10:** Yes. Official academic records are necessary to ensure accurate initial-eligibility certifications and should be submitted via an [approved channel](#) whenever possible. Given the unique circumstances, if only unofficial records are available for students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date, please submit them to [ec-processing@ncaa.org](mailto:ec-processing@ncaa.org) directly from the email address associated with the student's Eligibility Center account for use in the academic evaluation.

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**Q11:** Will students who meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria be required to submit a final high school transcript with proof of graduation?

**A11:** Proof of graduation is not a requirement for the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver, which may be applied during a preliminary evaluation; however, students are encouraged to submit a final high school transcript (similar to early academic qualifiers) when it becomes available to complete their academic record for NCAA Research purposes.

## Academic Evaluations

**Q12:** How will the Eligibility Center approach schools with NCAA-approved core courses that have moved to distance or e-learning environments in Spring/Summer 2020 due to school closures?

**A12:** The Eligibility Center will not require a separate review of distance or e-learning programs used for Spring/Summer 2020 in response to closures due to COVID-19. Students are encouraged to complete their NCAA-approved core courses through the channels of instruction provided or recommended by their school, district or state department of education.

*Note:* This policy will apply to students from all grade levels (e.g., freshmen, sophomores) who complete distance or e-learning courses in Spring/Summer 2020.

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**Q13:** For schools with NCAA-approved core courses, how will the Eligibility Center approach those schools that issue Pass/Fail grades in Spring/Summer 2020 due to school closures?

**A13:** For NCAA-approved core courses completed in Spring/Summer 2020 that have been issued a grade of Pass, the Eligibility Center will apply the credit earned in these courses toward the core-course requirement in the student's certification. If the student's core-course GPA would increase by assigning a value of 2.300, this value will be assigned to the Passed courses. However, if the student's core-course GPA would decrease by including the 2.300 value for Passed courses, the student's core-course GPA will be calculated based only on courses with assigned letter grades from previous terms (credit from these courses will still be applied toward the student's core-course requirements).

*Note:* This policy will apply to students from all grade levels (e.g., freshmen, sophomores) who successfully complete NCAA-approved pass/fail courses in Spring/Summer 2020.

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**Q14:** Will there be any flexibility in the Division I core-course time limitation for students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date (as determined by the start of year nine)?

**A14:** Yes. For students with an expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduation date, up to six core-course units completed after starting the seventh semester (and before full-time enrollment) will be used in the student's initial-eligibility certification, regardless of whether the student graduated on time or when the courses are completed (i.e., during the academic year or Summer term). This approach will allow students impacted by school closures to complete additional core courses toward their initial eligibility.

*Note:* For Division I, all core courses completed before full-time enrollment may be used in the academic-redshirt certification.

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**Q15:** Will expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates (as determined by the start of year nine) who delay graduation or full-time enrollment be eligible to receive the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver?

**A15:** Yes. Policies applicable to expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates will apply regardless of when they graduate or enroll full time.

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**Q16:** How will the Eligibility Center approach the cancellation of international leaving examinations in Spring/Summer 2020?

**A16:** The Eligibility Center encourages submission of official year-by-year transcripts for evaluation of international students. In terms of satisfying graduation requirements, for countries and/or examination boards issuing certificates/diplomas without final exams (based on other assessment methodologies), the Eligibility Center will accept the credential as acceptable proof of high school graduation provided it is listed as an acceptable proof of graduation in the [NCAA International Guide](#). As a reminder, the [Graduation Timeline Confirmation Form](#) may also be submitted, as appropriate, to extend the graduation timeline.

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**Q17:** What if students do not meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria or legislated initial-eligibility requirements based on their complete academic record?

**A17:** Member institutions may submit an initial-eligibility waiver for students who do not meet COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria or legislated initial-eligibility requirements. ([See Q1a.](#))

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**Q18:** Will there be any impact to the PSA-Review process?

**A18:** Yes. Given the unique circumstances due to COVID-19, staff will not send a program task for courses completed in Spring/Summer 2020. Further, for expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates who meet COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria for competition, staff will not submit a test-score inquiry or initiate a validity review regarding courses completed in the seventh semester and beyond.

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**Q19:** Will the Eligibility Center re-evaluate accounts that reflect the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver (e.g., based on a final transcript that would result in Qualifier status)?

**A19:** No—unless there is an issue regarding the validity of the academic credentials that were used to meet the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver.

### Subsequent Classes

**Q20:** Will other classes (e.g., sophomores, juniors) receive any flexibility in the NCAA initial-eligibility standard as a result of the environment in Spring/Summer 2020?

**A20:** The approach to Pass/Fail grades and distance/e-learning courses will apply to all students, including subsequent classes, who complete NCAA-approved core courses in Spring/Summer 2020. At this time, we do not anticipate that the COVID-19 Automatic Waiver criteria will extend beyond expected Spring/Summer 2020 graduates, but we will continue to monitor the situation as it evolves.