

The logo for PLAYNAIA, with 'PLAY' in red and 'NAIA' in white with a blue outline.

THE NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

A blue-tinted photograph of several hands reaching up to hold a trophy together.

# Membership Guide

NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER  
2017-18

# Membership Guide to the NAIA Eligibility Center

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1A. OVERVIEW

#### NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER PURPOSE

The purpose of the NAIA Eligibility Center is to provide independent and objective determinations of initial eligibility for all students wishing to participate in NAIA athletics for the first time. Determinations are made based on both academic and competitive experience standards.

#### NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER ROLE

The NAIA Eligibility Center is responsible for determining the eligibility of first-time NAIA student-athletes. Eligibility for any student-athlete playing NAIA sports for the first time in the Fall of 2011 and beyond must be determined by the NAIA Eligibility Center, and all NAIA member schools are bound by the center's eligibility decisions.

Eligibility determinations are based primarily on information provided by the individual registrant, academic records forwarded directly to the NAIA Eligibility Center by high schools or colleges the student attended, and standardized test-score results transmitted directly by the national testing agency.

#### NAIA MEMBER INSTITUTION ROLE

As part of an eligibility review for a given prospective student-athlete, the NAIA Eligibility Center may contact institutions recruiting that individual and request that the institution(s) provide information that could have a bearing on the center's eligibility determination. The request will be forwarded to the institution's faculty athletics representative, director of athletics and head coach. To the extent the institution has information that could affect the center's eligibility determination, the institution is obligated to provide the information upon request.

### 1B. COMMITTEES

Four committees are associated with the NAIA Eligibility Center: the NAIA Council of Presidents Committee on the NAIA Eligibility Center, NAIA National Eligibility Committee, NAIA Competitive Experience Committee, and International Student Records Advisory Committee. These committees provide direction and oversight to the NAIA Eligibility Center.

#### NAIA COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE ON THE NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

The charge of the committee initially was to provide general oversight of the NAIA Eligibility Center during the initial period of the center's establishment. The committee currently consults with the NAIA National Office and NAIA Eligibility Center staff members regarding the center's business plan and financial structure, and works in

concert with the National Eligibility Committee and Committee on Competitive Experience related to policy and procedural matters.

#### **NAIA NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE**

The NAIA National Eligibility Committee operates under NAIA policy and works in the disposition of all eligibility cases, problems or interpretations. This committee acts as the interpreting body of NAIA Bylaws and initiates changes in NAIA standards and policies as it feels are in the best interest of the organization and makes recommendations for consideration of the membership. The responsibilities of the committee include academic eligibility matters related to operations of the NAIA Eligibility Center.

#### **NAIA COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

The charge of the committee is to provide oversight of the NAIA Eligibility Center related to competitive experience operations, to develop policies, including definitions and determinations of elite-level competition, and to review appeals submitted by member institutions related to competitive experience eligibility for individual student-athletes.

#### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECORDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The committee is recognized as having specialized expertise in the area of international student credentials. The committee serves as an advisory group assisting with development of general policies related to the review of international student records.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

The NAIA Eligibility Center, campus faculty athletics representatives and conference eligibility chairs work in concert to ensure accurate initial-eligibility decisions for NAIA student-athletes.

### **2A. NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTER**

The NAIA Eligibility Center is responsible for making an initial determination of a student's eligibility, based primarily on information supplied by the student, standardized test scores, academic transcripts, and information related to the student's competitive experience outside the traditional collegiate setting, including but not limited to unattached competition.

After a complete review of information available for a given student, the NAIA Eligibility Center notifies the student and institutions that have included the student on Short Lists of the NAIA Eligibility Center's determination. The NAIA Eligibility Center's communication summarizes the basis for its decision and also informs the student and institutions of their affirmative responsibility to provide any additional information that could potentially affect the student's eligibility status. Students or institutions having information that could affect a student's eligibility are obligated to provide the information without delay.

### **2B. NAIA INSTITUTIONS**

Coaches, faculty athletics representatives and campus administrators share responsibility to educate prospective student-athletes about NAIA rules and explore issues that will contribute to an accurate eligibility determination. Should any representative of the institution have information that could affect the student's

eligibility or have reason to believe the center's determination is in error, the individual and institution have an affirmative responsibility to provide that information to the NAIA Eligibility Center without delay. Failure to do so will jeopardize the student's eligibility status, trigger contest forfeitures and be addressed by the NAIA Conduct and Ethics Committee as a violation of NAIA rules.

The institution's faculty athletics representative is responsible for performing various tasks regarding each student's eligibility. Please refer to [Section 7C](#) for specific details.

The faculty athletics representative is also responsible for completion of NAIA eligibility forms (including signatures of coaches and campus administrators) and submission of the applicable forms to the conference eligibility chair prior to the first competition.

A student's amateur status is outside the scope of the Eligibility Center charge. It is the responsibility of NAIA member institution to examine the amateur standing of students on their campuses.

## **2C. NAIA CONFERENCES**

The role of conference eligibility chairs remains unchanged as a result of the establishment of the NAIA Eligibility Center. Conference eligibility chairs serve as an additional safeguard in ensuring the accuracy and integrity of eligibility decisions for student-athletes participating in NAIA conference and postseason competition. Specifically, conference eligibility chairs are responsible for:

- Assisting in rules education for conference and campus student-athletes, coaches, faculty and administrators.
- Reviewing required forms and information submitted by campus faculty athletics representatives related to the eligibility of individual student-athletes.
- Serving as chairs for conference reviews of eligibility cases and appeals for individual student-athletes, including preparation of conference recommendations regarding an individual student-athlete's eligibility status, consequences for violations of eligibility rules, and communication of conference eligibility recommendations to the NAIA National Office.

During the performance of his or her duties, should a conference eligibility chair identify information that could affect the student's eligibility or have reason to believe the center's determination is in error, the chair has an affirmative responsibility to provide that information to the NAIA Eligibility Center and institution without delay.

## **3. PROSPECTIVE STUDENT ATHLETE REGISTRATION PROCESS**

### **3A. ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION**

NAIA Eligibility Center determinations are based primarily on information from three sources: the student (through information provided on his/her online registration and phone or email communications), academic information (through transcripts, communications with institutions and official websites or policy information, academic databases and official standardized test scores), and competitive experience information (from previous league/team contacts, coaches, websites and databases).

## ONLINE REGISTRATION

Each student is required to register at the NAIA Eligibility Center Website: [www.PlayNAIA.org](http://www.PlayNAIA.org). The student provides information in three primary areas: personal information, academic information, and information about playing experience both inside and outside the traditional collegiate setting after high school graduation.

## TRANSCRIPTS

All registrants are required to submit official, final transcripts from their previous institution(s). Official transcripts must be submitted directly by the institution via one of the accepted electronic transcript services, the [high school portal](#), or via mail directly by the issuing institution. Please note that U.S. high school students who are eligible for an early decision (Section 3B) are required to submit only a complete junior year or senior mid-year transcript and a final high school transcript is not required.

School-stamped copies of international secondary (high school) records for registered international students will be accepted from either the student's issuing institution or the records department of an NAIA member institution. School-stamped copies from a member institution must not be sent by any member of the school's athletic department. International post-secondary records must be sent by the issuing institution. They cannot be sent by the NAIA member institution. Complete instructions can be found online at <http://www.playnaia.org/page/InternationalFAQ.php>.

Electronic submission of international academic records is accepted through the application process of an [InCred Evaluation](#). InCred Evaluations is an optional service that provides a credential evaluation typically used in the admissions and transfer credit assessment by NAIA institutions for international applicants. An InCred Evaluation allows students to consolidate their eligibility and admissions reviews. Records submitted to the NAIA Eligibility Center electronically can be used for an InCred Evaluation and for NAIA Eligibility Center eligibility determinations.

## TEST SCORES

SAT and/or ACT standardized test scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to the NAIA Eligibility Center electronically. The NAIA Eligibility Center code for both SAT and ACT is 9876.

## 3B.

## ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS

Eligibility determinations are based on the student's academic achievement, (as applicable) the student's status as a transfer student, collegiate competition, and competition outside the traditional collegiate setting after high school graduation.

## ACADEMICS FOR TRANSFERS

Academic achievement and (as applicable) status as a transfer student are evaluated in a manner consistent with current NAIA rules.

## COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCE

Students who delay college enrollment after high school graduation, withdraw from college for one or more terms after initial college enrollment, or do not participate in collegiate competition for one or more years while enrolled in college are subject to a competitive experience review. Students in these circumstances are required to submit all competitive experiences to the NAIA Eligibility Center during the registration



process. The student's competition outside the traditional collegiate setting is evaluated by the NAIA Eligibility Center, and a determination is made regarding the student's remaining NAIA eligibility. Please note that, while ensuring the amateur status of each student remains the responsibility of the institution, the NAIA Eligibility Center will notify relevant parties in situations where information becomes available which brings into question the amateur status of a particular student. However, amateurism rules are not applied as part of an NAIA Eligibility Center determination.

### EARLY DECISIONS

Incoming U.S. freshman student-athletes are eligible for an early decision if they have achieved the required minimum test score in accordance with NAIA Bylaws Article V, Section C, Item 2a and have a GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) at the completion of their junior year of high school or at least 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) after 7 semesters of high school. The NAIA Eligibility Center accepts completed transcripts submitted directly by the student's high school for an early decision either after completion of the student's junior year or after completion of the 7<sup>th</sup> semester, depending on which elevated GPA the student meets. Homeschooled, GED and international students are not eligible to receive an early decision.

### 3C. NOTIFICATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES AFTER DETERMINATION

When a determination is made regarding a registered student's eligibility, the NAIA Eligibility Center notifies the student and each institution that has included that student on its Short List via the student's online profile at [www.PlayNAIA.org](http://www.PlayNAIA.org).

#### STUDENT

The student's online status is updated to reflect the determination made by the NAIA Eligibility Center.

#### NAIA INSTITUTION

Each institution that has the student currently listed on its Short List receives email communication from the NAIA Eligibility Center to notify them of the student's status. Those institutions are able to view the student's updated status online as well.

### 3D. REACTIVATION OF STUDENT REGISTRATION

Reactivation is the process that institutions and students use to have the NAIA Eligibility Center provide an updated eligibility determination. If a student registered with the Eligibility Center in a previous term and the following describes that student's situation, then the NAIA school and the student-athlete will need to take steps to reactivate. Students do not need to pay the registration fee again.

1. **Currently not eligible:** A currently enrolled student previously received a decision of 'Not Eligible' and has made up the academic work necessary to become eligible for a subsequent term
2. **Never received a decision:** A student never received a decision for a variety of reasons including not having provided all required information
3. **Eligible but never enrolled:** A student received an eligible determination, never enrolled at an NAIA institution (OR has not maintained continuous identification at the same NAIA institution), never competed and now plans to play

Refer to the [Situation Analysis](#) for additional descriptions of when students need to be reactivated.

### **3E. FEES**

The NAIA Eligibility Center [registration fee](#) is a one-time, non-refundable fee.

Note: NAIA Institutions are not allowed to pay this fee on behalf of a student-athlete.

### **3F. FEE WAIVERS**

Registration fee waivers are available based on demonstrated need for U.S. students only. Fee waiver requests must be reviewed and approved by the NAIA Eligibility Center. The NAIA Eligibility Center fees are non-refundable. If a student pays the fee prior to submitting the required fee waiver information, a fee waiver cannot be used.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

U.S. high school students who, at the time of registration with the NAIA Eligibility Center, qualify for a waiver of SAT or ACT testing fees or for the Federal free or reduced-priced school lunch program are eligible for a registration fee waiver. The student must be registered and the student's high school must submit the fee waiver confirmation through the NAIA High School Portal. The primary user of the High School Portal account will need to verify that the student meets one of the available criteria for a fee waiver to be approved.

#### **TRANSFER STUDENTS**

Fee waivers for transfers from two- or four-year colleges are based on a student's qualification for a minimum of \$4,500 in Federal Pell Grants during the academic year in which the student registers with the NAIA Eligibility Center. The student's college Office of Financial Aid must submit the Fee Waiver Request form indicating that the student meets this criterion for a fee waiver request to be approved. The student must be registered with the NAIA Eligibility Center to qualify for a fee waiver.

If a transfer student registers after the completion of the last academic term at the previous institution and prior to enrollment at the NAIA institution, the student may request a waiver based on Pell Grant funds awarded in the immediately previous or coming academic years. For the request to be approved, the institution that awarded funds must submit formal written notification.

#### **REACTIVATION**

Students who are required to submit new information after previously registering and paying the registration fee are not required to pay additional fees.

## **4. NAIA CONNECTIONS**

NAIA Connections is a service available to all students who register with the NAIA Eligibility Center. This service allows registrants to indicate interest in NAIA institutions through the registration process and provides NAIA institutions with a resource for potential recruits.

### **4A. STUDENT REGISTRANT**

All registered students have the option to participate in NAIA Connections. This feature allows the student to create a customized Sport Resume highlighting his or her sport-

specific accomplishments, positions, events and honors. Each student has the ability to opt in or out of the NAIA Connections service at any time.

Students can use an advanced search to find NAIA schools based on sports offered, the type of institution (location, number of students, public/private) and the academic areas available. The student can select up to five institutions to send his or her Sport Resume.

A student's Sport Resume will not be disabled upon the student being given an eligibility determination (regardless of the decision).

#### **4B. NAIA INSTITUTION**

When a student sends an NAIA Connections request to an institution, the institution's specified sport coach and admissions office receive email notification. This notification includes a link back to the student's Sport Resume. All NAIA Connections inquiries are archived in the institution's PlayNAIA Manager so coaches and admissions staff can review the inventory at any time.

Designated admissions and athletic department staff at NAIA institutions can also use NAIA Connections in PlayNAIA Manager to search the entire pool of students participating in NAIA Connections at that time.

### **5. COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCE**

#### **5A. LEGISLATION**

NAIA legislation states that effective August 1, 2011, participation in any elite-level athletic competition on or after the first day of the thirteenth month following high school graduation or the equivalent will be counted as a season of competition. The NAIA Competitive Experience Committee has defined elite-level competition as that which is at or above an NAIA level.

#### **5B. EVALUATIVE CRITERIA**

For the purpose of evaluating competitive experiences to determine whether participation constitutes a season of competition, the NAIA Competitive Experience Committee has developed a series of evaluative criteria for both competition as a member of a team and individual competition in individual sports. These criteria are used by the NAIA Eligibility Center as well as NAIA institutions in determining whether a particular competitive experience outside of the collegiate setting is chargeable towards a season of competition for a student-athlete. All determinations are subject to review by the NAIA Competitive Experience Committee.

##### **COMPETITION AS A MEMBER OF A TEAM**

Competition shall be considered elite-level if any two or more of the following criteria are met:

1. At least 10% of competitors are current professionals.
2. At least 50% of competitors are current intercollegiate players.
3. Contracts are used to outline an exchange of commitment between participants and the league/ team.
4. Specific participants are reimbursed for travel, meals and/or lodging expenses.
5. Participation is part of a national team or an Olympic-level team.

6. Participation is selective based on performance.
7. The number of regularly scheduled contests or dates of competition for the league/team is equivalent to or greater than 80% of NAIA contest limitations.

#### “U-19” Exception

A league considered “U 19” shall not be considered “elite-level” competition, and is not subject to the competitive experience criteria, provided:

- Participants competing in the league are age 19 or younger, and
- Competition in the league does not regularly include contests against teams with 50% or more current college players or teams with 10% or more current professionals.

### INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION IN INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

A student participating as an individual shall be charged a season of competition for participating in at least three elite-level events in a 12-month window. An event shall be considered “elite-level competition” if any one of the following criteria is met:

1. Event regularly includes individuals considered professional at the time of participation in the event.
2. Event regularly includes at least 50% of individuals who participated in intercollegiate athletics at U.S. colleges or universities during the corresponding academic year.
3. Event uses contracts to outline an exchange of commitment between some participants and the event.
4. Event includes specific participants who are reimbursed for travel, meals and/or lodging expenses.
5. Event uses performance-based selectivity to determine field.

#### “U-19” Exception

An event considered “U 19” shall not be considered “elite-level” competition, and is not subject to the competitive experience criteria, provided:

- Participants competing in the event are age 19 or younger, and
- The competitive field in the event does not regularly consist of 50% or more current college players or 10% or more current professionals.

### 5C. DIRECTORY OF COMPETITION

The Directory of Competition is an evolving database of competitive experiences worldwide. This database indicates whether competitive experiences listed are counted towards a season of competition. The NAIA Eligibility Center will continually add new experiences to this directory as well as update the status of those already present when new information becomes available. The directory should not be considered all-inclusive.

#### HOW TO ACCESS

The Directory of Competition is available in PlayNAIA Manager at [www.playnaia.org](http://www.playnaia.org). Any staff member who has been given permission to access their institution’s PlayNAIA Manager Short List has access to the directory.

#### STATUS OPTIONS

There are five possible statuses in which competitive experiences can be categorized: pending, submitted for review, intercollegiate, chargeable, and not chargeable.

### **PENDING**

A status of **pending** indicates that a determination has not yet been made OR the competitive experience will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis due to the variability of divisions or teams within the experience.

### **SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW**

A status of **submitted for review** indicates that a student-athlete has submitted this competitive experience during his or her registration, and the NAIA Eligibility Center is currently gathering necessary information to make a determination.

### **INTERCOLLEGIATE**

A status of **intercollegiate** indicates that the competition meets the definition of intercollegiate competition and is comparable to using a season of competition at an NAIA school or other higher education institution with a similar intercollegiate structure.

### **CHARGEABLE**

A status of **chargeable** indicates that the competitive experience is chargeable toward one season of NAIA competition for each season the athlete competed.

### **NOT CHARGEABLE**

A status of **not chargeable** indicates that the competitive experience is not chargeable against a student's NAIA eligibility.

## **6. POLICIES**

### **6A. BREAK IN ENROLLMENT**

Any student who has a break in NAIA enrollment, either between high school and college or between terms in college, will be subject to a review of the student's competitive experience during this period.

In instances where a student has a break in enrollment *prior to* participating for the first time in the NAIA, the student is required to register (or supplement a previous registration) with the NAIA Eligibility Center before participating in the NAIA. If the student has a break in enrollment after having already represented an NAIA institution in NAIA competition, the student's continuing eligibility, including competitive experience, remains the responsibility of the member institution.

### **6B. 12-MONTH WINDOW**

For purposes of competitive experience, only one season of competition can be charged in any given 12-month period of time (i.e., "12-month window"), with the following exceptions:

Under NAIA rules, students can be charged more than one season during a 12-month period when:

Participation by a student in intercollegiate competition occurs in portions of two academic years during a given 12-month period. This would cause the student to be charged two seasons of competition.

A student represents two different institutions in the same academic year, according to the transfer provisions of Bylaws Article 5, Section F, Item 10. This would result in the student being charged two seasons of competition.

The following guidelines are used in arranging 12-month windows:

- A 12-month window is defined as 365 consecutive days.
- A 12-month window can begin on any date (not necessarily January 1). By definition, the beginning date determines the end of a given 12-month window.
- All intercollegiate competition that takes places during the institution's defined (e.g., 24-week) season in a given sport must be included within a student's single 12-month window. Depending on when the intercollegiate season starts, this can cause a 12-month window preceding an intercollegiate season to end early.
- The beginning point for a given 12-month window can be shifted forward or backward (to include the full collegiate season and additional outside competition in the same 12-month window).
- The first day of one 12-month window does not have to be placed directly at the end of the previous 12-month window. If no collegiate or outside competition occurs for a period of time after the end of one window, the beginning of the next 12-month window can be delayed so as to be of maximum benefit to the student.

#### **6C. POST-SECONDARY AMATEUR YEAR**

Effective beginning with the 2013-14 academic year, prospective student-athletes are permitted to compete in outside, amateur competition until the first day of the thirteenth month following high school graduation or equivalent.

This window does not exempt a student from being charged seasons of competition for intercollegiate play nor does it exempt the student from NAIA amateurism bylaws.

Seasons of competition previously charged under prior NAIA Bylaws are not reevaluated with the 2013-14 bylaw change.

#### **6D. UNATTACHED COMPETITION**

While enrolled as a full-time collegiate student at an NAIA institution a student will not be charged a season of competition based on participation as an unattached student-athlete provided the participation is consistent with the unattached criteria outlined in the NAIA Handbook, Article V. Section B.10 (2011-12 editions and later).

A student who represents his or her institution in a given year and, during the same year, competes unattached or as a member of an outside team will be charged only one season of competition.

#### **6E. UNAVAILABLE INFORMATION**

In the circumstance that information regarding a student's academic history or competitive experience is either not available to the NAIA Eligibility Center or key parties are uncooperative, it is the responsibility of the student to provide all relevant information to the NAIA Eligibility Center. Failure to do so will result in the student being ruled ineligible until such time as the necessary information is produced.



## **6F. AMATEUR STATUS**

Determinations regarding a student's amateur status are not made by the NAIA Eligibility Center. Thus, it remains the responsibility of each NAIA institution to ensure that each student-athlete representing the institution in NAIA competition is in full compliance with NAIA amateurism guidelines.

## **6G. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY**

When a student has been given determination of eligible by the NAIA Eligibility Center and when the student has participated in NAIA competition, all eligibility matters from that point forward become the responsibility of the institution the student is attending.

When a student has been given determination of eligible by the NAIA Eligibility Center and when the student has maintained continuous identification at the same institution, all eligibility matters from that point forward become the responsibility of the institution the student is attending.

## **6H. EMERGING AND INVITATIONAL SPORTS**

Prospective students planning to participate in any NAIA emerging sports are not required to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center. The eligibility of these students is reviewed, determined and certified by the institution's faculty athletics representative or designated eligibility representative.

Beginning with the second full academic year after attaining Invitational sport status, all prospective students planning to participate in the sport from that time forward are required to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center. Students who were certified as eligible on campus and competed at the varsity level in the sport during its first year of invitational status are not required to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center. Conversely, students at any NAIA institution who were not certified and did not participate in the first year of the invitational sport, are required to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center.

## **7. NAIA MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES**

### **7A. NAIAHELP**

#### **SET UP ACCESS FOR PLAYNAIA MANAGER USERS ON CAMPUS**

Each institution's athletics director is responsible for giving coaches, faculty athletics representatives, admissions personnel and administrators access to PlayNAIA Manager using NAIA Help. Once a staff member has been granted permission and issued a password, he or she logs in on PlayNAIA.org in the upper right "Eligibility Center Login" area. Instructions for athletics directors to use NAIA Help to provide access can be found [here](#).

#### **MAINTAIN INSTITUTION INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL SEARCH**

The NAIA Eligibility Center website and NAIA Connections service allow students registered with the Eligibility Center to learn more about NAIA schools based on the students' preferences. The information used to facilitate these searches is derived from information entered by NAIA institutions through NAIA Help. Maintaining updated information from each NAIA institution provides students with an accurate and productive search.

## **ENSURE THAT STAFF INFORMATION IN NAIAHELP IS CURRENT**

The NAIA Eligibility Center uses names and e-mail addresses in NAIA Help to communicate with coaches, faculty athletics representatives, Eligibility Center Contact and others on campus regarding eligibility issues. It is important that these records are kept current so correspondence and eligibility decisions can be sent to the proper personnel.

## **7B.**

### **PLAYNAIA MANAGER**

Each institution has its own PlayNAIA Manager section in [PlayNAIA.org](http://PlayNAIA.org). In PlayNAIA Manager, coaches and others help build the institution's Short List, view the status of registered students, and access NAIA Connections.

### **SHORT LIST**

An institution's Short List includes the names of prospective students who are considered each coach's recruit list. Students with a break between high school graduation and attendance at an NAIA school are required to be on a Short List to receive an eligibility decision from the NAIA Eligibility Center.

Each institution has only one Short List which is accessible at PlayNAIA Manager. This Short List is exclusive to each institution and can only be seen by the institution's designated staff and the NAIA Eligibility Center staff.

### **ADD STUDENTS TO A SHORT LIST**

Only those students who have registered with PlayNAIA.org online can be added to an institution's Short List. Staff members with access to PlayNAIA Manager can locate a registered user by searching either the student's NAIA Eligibility Center ID number or the student's last name *and* sport. Once a student has been added to an institution's Short List, he or she can be removed at any time.

### **NAIA CONNECTIONS**

Permitted staff members will be able to access the NAIA Connections service through PlayNAIA Manager.

### **ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT STAFF**

When a student indicates interest in an institution through NAIA Connections, head coaches in the student's selected sport(s) at this institution are notified by email. This email provides a direct link to the student's Sport Resume. Designated staff can also access the list of all students who have indicated an interest in the institution through PlayNAIA Manager. This list contains a summary of each interested student and a link to each student's Sport Resume.

### **ADMISSIONS STAFF**

When a student indicates interest in an institution through NAIA Connections, the institution's designated admissions staff is notified by email, regardless of the student's selected sport(s).



**INITIAL ELIGIBILITY**

The institution's faculty athletics representative is responsible for confirming that every student-athlete who will be participating in NAIA competition for the first time has:

- Registered with the NAIA Eligibility Center and received a determination of eligible;
- Graduated from high school or been accepted by the certifying NAIA institution as a regular student in good standing;
- Enrolled as a full-time student;
- Completed all NAIA, institutional and conference forms required for NAIA competition;
- Met all other applicable institutional, conference and NAIA requirements for eligibility in NAIA competition, including amateur standing.

The faculty athletics representative also is responsible for completion of NAIA [eligibility certification process \(ECP\)](#), including signatures of coaches and campus administrators, and submission of the applicable certificate packet to the conference eligibility chair prior to the first competition.

**FORMS**

Establishment of the NAIA Eligibility Center resulted in revisions to the forms required as part of the initial-eligibility process. The following specific actions are intended to eliminate redundancy in the work completed by NAIA Eligibility Center administrators and campus representatives:

- The **entering freshman eligibility certificate** previously completed by the campus faculty athletics representative is no longer required, replaced by an eligibility summary generated for each student by the NAIA Eligibility Center. It is still available as a resource online.
- The **competitive experience form** is used by campus faculty athletics representatives in certifying eligibility for continuing NAIA student-athletes who have a break in enrollment or time at a non-NAIA school. The competitive experience form can now be completed electronically through the ECP process and included in the certificate packet sent to the eligibility chair.
- The **transfer eligibility statement** is required for all transfer students and is completed by the campus faculty athletics representative. The transfer eligibility statement can now be completed electronically through the ECP process and included in the certificate packet sent to the eligibility chair.
- The **official eligibility certificate** currently completed by the campus faculty athletics representative (and signed by the head coach, athletics director, FAR and registrar) continues to be used and is available through ECP.
- The **certificate of clearance** completed by the student continues to be used but is no longer required to be submitted to the conference eligibility chair. It should be completed and retained on campus.

Campus personnel can obtain these forms using ECP software in NAIA Help or online at [www.NAIA.org](http://www.NAIA.org) in the legislative forms section.

**CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY**

All matters relating to the continuing eligibility of NAIA student-athletes are the responsibility of the institution as stated in the Official NAIA Policy Handbook.

## 8. APPEALS PROCESS

### 8A. REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF AN ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the NAIA Eligibility Center has completed its review and made an eligibility determination for a given individual, the center will communicate its decision to the faculty athletics representative, director of athletics, head coach and designated eligibility center contact at each institution that has included that student on its "Short List" of recruited student-athletes.

No more than **45 calendar days** after being notified of a determination by the NAIA Eligibility Center, an NAIA member institution (faculty athletics representative or director of athletics) may submit to the Eligibility Center a request for a review of the determination. The appropriate party(s) must complete the appropriate electronic form found on [PlayNAIA Manager](#). The institution's written request must clearly and concisely specify:

1. The specific eligibility criteria in question.
2. The institution's rationale explaining why it believes a different determination is warranted.
3. Factual evidence to support the institution's recommendation.

If the NAIA member institution is unable to obtain factual evidence to support its recommendation within the 45-day deadline, the faculty athletics representative or director of athletics may request an extension within that 45-day window. The extension request should include items 1 and 2 above, and an expected receipt date for item 3.

Extension requests received after the 45-day deadline will not be examined.

Upon receipt of a complete request for review, the NAIA Eligibility Center will notify via e-mail each institution that has included the student on its "Short List" that a request has been filed. Should one or more of the institutions receiving this notice request a summary of the issues under review, the Eligibility Center is obligated to provide the specific details in question.

After completing its review, the Eligibility Center will affirm, amend, or reverse the individual student-athlete's eligibility determination, notify the student and the institution that requested the review, and update the student's status on affected institutions' Short Lists and the student's secure account.

### 8B. FORMAL APPEAL OF AN ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

No more than **45 calendar days** after being notified of a determination by the NAIA Eligibility Center (or **30 calendar days** after completion of a request for review noted above), an institution may request a formal appeal, provided there is demonstrable evidence of:

1. Misapplication of NAIA rules; or
2. The decision having been reached in a capricious or arbitrary manner; or
3. Bias or discrimination in the decision-making process.

All requests for appeals must be submitted by the certifying institution's faculty athletics representative and director of athletics completing the appropriate online form

found on [PlayNAIA Manager](#). The institution's written request must clearly and concisely state the reasons for the appeal and include all relevant supporting documentation and information.

Appeals relating to an individual student-athlete's academic eligibility are directed by the NAIA Eligibility Center to the NAIA National Eligibility Committee. Appeals relating to an individual student-athlete's competitive experience are directed by the Eligibility Center to the NAIA Competitive Experience Committee. Appeals related to a student's academic eligibility and competitive experience are directed to both committees for a review of those issues within each committee's specific purview.

If the NAIA member institution is unable to obtain factual evidence supporting items 1, 2 or 3 above within the 45-day deadline (or 30-day deadline after a Request for Review is complete), a deadline extension can be requested by institution's faculty athletics representative and director of athletics. The extension request must be received during the appeal window and include the specific eligibility criteria in question, rationale for items 1, 2 or 3 above, and an expected receipt date supporting materials.

Extension requests received after the deadline will be not be examined.

Upon receipt of a formal request for appeal, the NAIA Eligibility Center will notify via e-mail each institution that has included the student on its Short List that a formal appeal has been filed. Should one or more of the institutions receiving this notice request a summary of the issues under appeal, the Eligibility Center is obligated to provide that information.

#### **INFORMATION REVIEWED ON APPEAL**

Determinations of eligibility rendered by the NAIA Eligibility Center for an individual student-athlete shall not be set aside by either the National Eligibility Committee or Competitive Experience Committee on appeal, unless one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. The determination rendered by the Eligibility Center was inconsistent with the proper application of NAIA eligibility rules.
2. The determination rendered by the Eligibility Center was demonstrably capricious or arbitrary.
3. There was demonstrable bias or discrimination that influenced the determination rendered by the Eligibility Center.

The National Eligibility Committee and/or Competitive Experience Committee will review the written request for appeal and reach one of the following decisions:

1. None of the conditions for hearing an appeal have been met, in which case the appeal may not be considered.
2. One or more of the conditions for hearing an appeal have been met, in which case the appropriate committee(s) will review the appeal and make a determination regarding the student's eligibility based on the merits of the appeal.

Once the appeal has been heard and decided by the appropriate committee(s) the institution that submitted the appeal will be notified of the decision. The student's status will be updated on the student's secure online account, and institutions can access via their PlayNAIA Manager accounts.

### **NEW INFORMATION**

New evidence is information not available for review by the NAIA Eligibility Center prior to the eligibility decision rendered by the Eligibility Center that could have materially affected a decision made by the Eligibility Center regarding an individual student-athlete. Such information should be submitted using the Request for Review of an Eligibility Center determination process.

### **8C. NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE APPEAL**

An institution (Chief Executive Officer, Athletics Director or Faculty Athletics Representative) shall have the right to request a final appeal of an eligibility determination by the National Eligibility Committee or the Competitive Experience Committee to the National Coordinating Committee, provided one of the following is met:

1. There is new or additional evidence pertinent to the case that was not considered in the committee's decision.
2. The decision reached by the committee was demonstrably capricious or arbitrary.
3. There was demonstrable bias or discrimination which influenced the committee's decision.

An institution may request an appeal of the eligibility determination made by the National Eligibility Committee or Competitive Experience Committee to the National Coordinating Committee on one or more of the grounds listed. The request for an appeal must be made in writing to the NAIA Chief Executive Officer/President within 30 days of the notification to the school of the original committee decision. The letter should clearly state the reasons for the requested appeal and include documentation and information to support that request.

NOTE: Throughout the review/appeals processes, the Eligibility Center will not disclose to any institution or individual(s) the schools that have included the student on Short Lists.

### **FINAL AUTHORITY**

Any and all determinations concerning appeals issued by the National Eligibility Committee, Competitive Experience Committee, and National Coordinating Committee shall be final, binding and conclusive and shall not be subject to further review by any other authority within the NAIA (except as noted in Section 8C above).