

**The following selected information is obtained from the National Letter of Intent Website. It is for review only.**

**Included is important information for college bound NCAA Division One and Division Two athletes (and their parents).**

<http://www.nationalletter.org/>

## **Athletic Scholarships**

### **Does the NCAA award athletic scholarships?**

Individual schools award athletic scholarships, not the NCAA. Division I and II schools offer athletic scholarships. Division III schools offer academic scholarships only. NCAA members provide more than \$1.5 billion in athletics scholarships annually.

### **Is an athletic scholarship guaranteed for four years?**

At a minimum, an athletic scholarship must be a one academic year agreement. In Division I, institutions are permitted to offer multiyear scholarships. Athletic scholarships may be renewed and the school must notify the student-athlete in writing by July 1 whether the athletic scholarship will be renewed for the next academic year. Individual schools have appeal policies for scholarships that are reduced or not renewed. In most cases, the coach decides who gets a scholarship, what it covers and whether it will be renewed.

### **What do athletics scholarships cover?**

Division I and II institutions are permitted to provide a student-athlete with tuition and fees, room, board and required course-related books.

### **Can student-athletes receive other, non-athletic financial aid?**

Yes. Thousands of student-athletes benefit from academic scholarships and need-based aid, such as federal Pell Grants. In addition, there is money available from the NCAA's own Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund. Sometimes student-athletes cannot accept certain types of aid because of NCAA amateurism or financial aid requirements. Student-athletes and parents with questions on additional financial aid should check with their athletic department or college financial aid office.

### **Is an athletic scholarship the same thing as a National Letter of Intent?**

No, but they are often confused with each other. By signing a National Letter of Intent (NLI), a future NCAA student-athlete ends the recruiting process with all other NLI institutions and commits to a school for one year. In return, the student-athlete is guaranteed a one-year scholarship from that school. The NLI seeks to limit recruiting pressure but signing one is not a required step to earning an athletic scholarship.

### **Do many high school athletes earn athletics scholarships?**

Very few in fact. According to recent statistics, about 2 percent of high school athletes are awarded athletics scholarships to compete in college. This small number means high school student-athletes and their parents need to have realistic expectations about receiving an athletic scholarship to play sports in college. Academic, not athletic, achievement is the most reliable path to success in life.

## NLI Signing Dates for Prospective Student-Athletes Signing 2015-16 and Enrolling 2016-17

Sport (s)	Initial Signing Date	Final Signing Date
Basketball (Early Period)	November 11, 2015	November 18, 2015
Basketball (Regular Period)	April 13, 2016	Division I: May 18, 2016 Division II: August 1, 2016
Football (Midyear JC Transfer)	December 16, 2015	January 15, 2016
Football (Regular Period)	February 3, 2016	April 1, 2016
Soccer and Men's Water Polo	February 3, 2016	August 1, 2016
All Other Sports (Early Period)	November 11, 2015	November 18, 2015
All Other Sports (Regular Period)	April 13, 2016	August 1, 2016

### About the National Letter of Intent (NLI)

The NCAA manages the daily operations of the NLI program while the Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) provides governance oversight of the program. Started in 1964 with seven conferences and eight independent institutions, the program now includes 650 Division I and Division II participating institutions.

The NLI is a voluntary program with regard to both institutions and student-athletes. No prospective student-athlete or parent is required to sign the NLI and no institution is required to join the program.

The NLI is a binding agreement between a prospective student-athlete and an NLI member institution.

- A prospective student-athlete agrees to attend the institution full-time for one academic year (two semesters or three quarters).
- The institution agrees to provide athletics financial aid for one academic year (two semesters or three quarters).

The penalty for not fulfilling the NLI agreement: A student-athlete has to serve one year in residence (full-time, two semesters or three quarters) at the next NLI member institution and lose one season of competition in all sports.

An important provision of the NLI program is a recruiting prohibition applied after a prospective student-athlete signs the NLI. This prohibition requires member institutions to cease recruitment of a prospective student-athlete once an NLI is signed with another institution.

### Coaching Changes

I understand I have signed this NLI with the institution and not for a particular sport or coach. If a coach leaves the institution or the sports program (e.g., not retained, resigns), I remain bound by the provisions of this NLI. I understand it is not uncommon for a coach to leave his or her coaching position.

## Financial Aid Requirement

At the time I sign this NLI, I must receive a written offer of athletics financial aid for the entire 2015-16 academic year from the institution named in this document. The offer must list the terms, conditions and amount of the athletics aid award. (A midyear football two-year college transfer student-athlete must receive a written offer of athletics financial aid for the remainder of the 2014-15 academic year. If the institution does not renew the athletics aid for the following academic year, the student-athlete must be released of the NLI). In order for this NLI to be valid, my parent/legal guardian and I must sign the NLI and I must also sign the offer of athletics aid (see institutional policy for parent/legal guardian signature) prior to submission to the institution named in this document, and any other stated conditions must also be met. If the conditions stated on the financial aid offer are not met, this NLI shall be declared null and void.

- **Professional Sports Contract.** If I sign a professional sports contract in the sport in which I signed the NLI, I remain bound by the NLI in all other sports, even if NCAA rules prohibit the institution named in this document from providing me with athletics financial aid for the sport in which I signed the NLI.

## Recruiting Ban After Signing

I understand all participating conferences and institutions are obligated to respect my signing and shall cease contact with me and my family members after my signing this NLI which includes me and my family members not initiating contact with athletic staffs at other institutions. Any contact in excess of an exchange of a greeting is not permitted regardless of the conversation. The conversation does not have to result in recruiting discussion for a recruiting ban violation to occur. I shall notify any coach who contacts me that I have signed an NLI. Once I enroll in the institution named in this document, the NLI Recruiting Ban is no longer in effect and I shall be governed by applicable NCAA bylaws.

## Basic Penalty

I understand that if I do not attend the institution named in this document for one full academic year and I enroll in another institution participating in the NLI program, I may not compete in intercollegiate athletics until I have completed one full academic year in residence at the latter institution. Further, I understand I shall be charged with the loss of one season of intercollegiate athletics competition in all sports. This is in addition to any seasons of competition used at any institution.

## Early Signing Period Penalties

Prospective student-athletes who will participate in football are prohibited from signing an NLI during the early signing period for another sport. A prospective student-athlete who signs an NLI during the early period in a sport other than football will be ineligible for practice and competition in football during the first year of enrollment at an NLI member institution and shall forfeit one season of competition in football. In circumstances where a prospective student-athlete's primary sport is not football, but anticipates participating in football, the prospective student-athlete should delay signing an NLI until either the football signing period or during the regular signing period for all other sports.

## Release Request and Appeal Process

In the event I wish to be released from my NLI obligation, the NLI release request and appeal process information can be reviewed on the NLI Web site at <http://www.nationalletter.org/releaseAndAppeals>. I understand that the NLI Policy and Review Committee has been authorized to issue interpretations, settle disputes and consider appeals for complete release from the provisions of the NLI when extenuating circumstances are determined to exist and the signing institution denies my request for release. I further understand the Committee's decision may be appealed to the NLI Appeals Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding.

## Statute of Limitations

I am subject to the NLI penalty if I do not fulfill the agreement; however, if I do not attend an NLI member institution to fulfill the agreement or penalty and four years has elapsed since my signing date, the NLI is no longer binding. Therefore, this NLI is in full force and effect for a period of four years, commencing with the date I sign this NLI, if I do not attend an NLI member institution during the period of four years.

## Letter becomes Null and Void

**This NLI shall be declared null and void if any of the following occur:**

a. **Admissions Requirement.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if the institution named in this document notifies me in writing that I have been denied admission or, by the opening day of classes in fall 2015, has failed to provide me with written notice of admission, provided I have submitted a complete admission application. It is my obligation to provide, by request, my academic records and an application for admission to the signing institution. If I fail to submit the necessary academic credentials and/or application to determine an admission decision prior to September 1, the NLI office per its review with the institution will determine the status of the NLI.

If I am eligible for admission, but the institution named in this document defers my admission to a subsequent term, the NLI will be declared null and void; however, this NLI remains binding if I defer my admission.

b. **Eligibility Requirements.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if, by the opening day of classes in fall 2015, I have not met NCAA initial eligibility requirements; NCAA, conference or institution's requirements for athletics financial aid; or two-year college transfer requirements, provided I have submitted all necessary documents for eligibility determination.

(1) This NLI shall be rendered null and void if I become a nonqualifier per the NCAA Eligibility Center. This NLI remains valid if I am a partial qualifier per NCAA Division II rules unless I do not meet the institution's policies for receipt of athletics aid.

(2) It is my obligation to register with and provide information to the NCAA Eligibility Center. If I fail to submit the necessary documentation for an initial-eligibility decision and have not attended classes at the signing institution, the NLI office per its review with the institution will determine the status of the NLI.

(3) This NLI shall be rendered null and void if I am a midyear football two-year college transfer and I fail to graduate from two-year college at midyear, if required per NCAA, conference or institutional rules. The NLI remains binding for the following fall term if I graduated, was eligible for admission and financial aid and met the two-year college transfer requirements for competition for the winter or spring term, but chose to delay my admission.

c. **One-Year Absence.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if I have not attended any institution (two-year or four-year) for at least one academic year, provided my request for athletics financial aid for a subsequent fall term is denied by the signing institution. *Service in active duty with the U.S. armed forces or an official church mission for at least 12 months can use the One-Year Absence to null and void the NLI.* I may still apply this provision if I initially enrolled in an NLI member institution but have been absent for at least one academic year. To apply this provision, I must file with the appropriate conference office a statement from the director of athletics that such athletics financial aid will not be available for the requested fall term.

d. **Discontinued Sport** This NLI shall be declared null and void if the institution named in the document discontinues my sport.

e. **Recruiting Rules Violation.** If eligibility reinstatement by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff is necessary due to NCAA and/or conference recruiting rules violations, the institution must notify me that I have an option to have the NLI declared null and void due to the rules violation. It is my decision to have the NLI remain valid or to have the NLI declared null and void, permitting me to be recruited and not be subject to NLI penalties.

### **Am I required to sign an NLI?**

No. You are not required to sign an NLI but many prospective student-athletes sign because they want to create certainty in the recruiting process. Specifically, by signing an NLI, you agree to attend the institution for one year in exchange for the institution's promise, in writing, to provide you athletics financial aid for the entire academic year. Simply, by signing an NLI you are given an award including athletics aid for the upcoming academic year provided you are admitted to the institution and you are eligible for athletics aid under NCAA rules. Furthermore, by signing an NLI you effectively end the recruiting process. Once you sign an NLI, a recruiting ban goes into effect and you may no longer be recruited by any other NLI school.

### **If I am going to walk-on to the team, may I sign an NLI?**

No. An institution is strictly prohibited from allowing you to sign an NLI if you are a non-scholarship walk-on. In order for an NLI to be considered valid, it must be accompanied by an athletics financial aid award letter, which lists the terms and conditions of the award, including the amount of the financial aid. The athletics financial aid offer must be signed by both the prospective student-athlete and his or her parent or legal guardian. Simply put, there must be an athletic scholarship for an NLI to be valid.

### **Am I required to sign the NLI on the initial signing day for my sport?**

No. Signing the NLI is voluntary at any and all times. Prospective student-athletes are not required to sign the NLI on the first day of the signing period. Many prospective student-athletes do choose to sign their NLI on the first available day to bring an end to the recruiting process. You should note the NLI Provision allows a student 7 days from the date the NLI is issued (or the initial signing date if the NLI is received before that date) to sign and still have it declared valid.

### **May I sign an NLI before I am certified as eligible by the NCAA Eligibility Center?**

Yes. You may sign an NLI before you receive your final certification determination from the NCAA Eligibility Center. When you sign an NLI, you agree to submit the necessary information and documents to the Eligibility Center. These documents do not have to be received by the Eligibility Center before you sign an NLI. Later if you are determined by the Eligibility Center to be a nonqualifier per NCAA rules, this means you are not eligible at the NLI member institution for practice, competition and athletics aid. Your NLI will be declared null and void by the NLI signing institution, if by the opening day of classes, you are not academically eligible.

### **If I sign an NLI in one sport may I sign a second NLI in a different sport?**

No. You may only sign one valid NLI annually. Furthermore, when you sign an NLI, the letter is signed with an institution and not with a coach.