

NCAA review of online courses⁴³

For high school athletes, the ultimate value of an online course is what the National Collegiate Athletic Association thinks of it, because students enrolling for the first time at an NCAA Division I or Division II college or university must have their academic credentials certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center in order to practice, compete, or receive athletically related financial aid. To be eligible, students must earn a qualifying “core course” grade point average (based on a predetermined number of core courses) and a qualifying test score.

Since January 2010, the Eligibility Center has reviewed over 750 “nontraditional” schools and programs (including online, software-based, credit recovery, and other similar formats) to determine alignment with NCAA requirements.⁴⁴

For a course to be considered core:

- The course must be a recognized academic course and qualify for high school graduation credit in one or more of the following areas: English, mathematics, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy.
- The course must be four-year college preparatory.
- Mathematics must be at the level of Algebra I or higher.
- The course must be taught by a qualified instructor.
- The course must be taught at or above the high school’s regular academic level.

Courses taught through nontraditional means (including online, software-based, credit recovery and other similar courses) must also satisfy the following requirements:

- The instructor and the student have ongoing access to and regular interaction with one another for purposes of teaching, evaluating, and providing assistance to the student throughout the duration of the course.
- The student’s work (e.g., exams, papers, assignments) is available for evaluation and validation.
- Evaluation of the student’s work is conducted by the appropriate academic authorities in accordance with the high school’s established academic policies.
- The course includes a defined time period for completion.
- The course is acceptable for any student and is placed on the high school transcript.

Requirements for nontraditional courses for Division I became effective for coursework completed August 1, 2010, or after. For Division II, the requirements for nontraditional courses for any student first enrolling August 1, 2011, and after are effective regardless of course completion date.

⁴³ Thank you to Nick Sproull at the NCAA for contributing this section.

⁴⁴ www.eligibilitycenter.org provides information on which courses have been reviewed by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Specific updates regarding nontraditional coursework review can be found in the “Additional Information” box for each school and program.