



# Quick Reference Guide to the NLI

This reference guide is intended to be a resource. Additional NLI regulations and procedures are located at [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org).

## Signing Dates for 2021-22 Enrollment

Division I Basketball (Early Period)  
November 11 - November 18, 2020

Division I Basketball (Regular Period)  
April 14 - May 19, 2021

Division I Football (Early Period)  
December 16 - 18, 2020

Division I and II Football  
(Midyear JC Transfer)  
December 16, 2020 - January 15, 2021

Football (Regular Period)  
February 3 - April 1, 2021 (Division I)  
February 3 - Aug. 1, 2021 (Division II)

All Other Division I and II Sports  
November 11, 2020 - August 1, 2021

Approximately 49,000 prospective student-athletes sign NLI's to attend NCAA Division I or II institutions.

## What is the National Letter of Intent (NLI)?

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

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

*Penalty for not fulfilling the NLI agreement: 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.*

## Valid NLI

NLI must be accompanied by an athletics financial aid agreement (aid from an athletics source).

NLI must include the NCAA ID. The NCAA ID will be available to the prospective student-athlete once registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center and will be available to the institution once the prospective student-athlete is placed on the Institutional Request List (IRL). All junior college prospective student-athletes must also have an NCAA ID included on the NLI.

NLI may not be signed prior to the signing dates for the applicable sport.

NLI must include a parent or legal guardian signature if the prospective student-athlete is under the age of 21, regardless of marital status.

The Conference Office validates the NLI to ensure the NLI and athletics aid agreement are complete and meet all NLI and NCAA requirements.

## How does the institution process the NLI?

Institution issues NLI and offer of athletics aid to the prospective student-athlete.

Prospective student-athlete and parent signs NLI and athletics aid agreement.

- Must be signed within 7 days of issuance date. (7 day deadline does not apply to the football early signing period or when 7 days are not left in the signing period)

Institution verifies required information and uploads NLI to its Conference Office for validation.

- Must be filed with the Conference within 14 days of final signature.

Prospective student-athletes and parents can sign NLI's with electronic or digital signatures. Mobile apps can be used to process and sign with the institution.

## Coaching Change

A prospective student-athlete signs with an institution. If the coach leaves, the NLI signee is still bound by the provisions of the NLI.

**What is the Recruiting Ban?** Other institutions must respect the prospective student-athlete's NLI signing by ceasing all communication.

The recruiting ban remains in effect until the prospective student-athlete enrolls at the signing institution. Once enrolled, the student-athlete is governed by NCAA recruiting regulations.

If the prospective student-athlete does not enroll at the signing institution, the recruiting ban will be lifted after the institution's academic year has elapsed (e.g., prospective student-athlete signs during 2019-20, the recruiting ban applies through the end of the 2020-21 academic year).

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## How is the NLI declared null and void?

- Denied admission.
- Does not meet NCAA, institutional or conference eligibility requirements.
- One-Year Absence.
  - Signee does not enroll (two-year or four-year institution) for at least one academic year and the scholarship (in its same amount) is no longer available. Also applies to a signee who serves in the U.S. Armed Forces or Church Mission for one year. NLI remains binding if the scholarship (in its same amount) is available.
- Discontinued Sport.
  - Sport is no longer offered, includes student-athletes who are already enrolled.
- Recruiting Rules Violation.
  - NLI may be declared null and void if the violation is substantiated and prompts the need for reinstatement by the NCAA staff. It is the prospective student-athlete's choice to null and void the NLI under these circumstances.

### How can a signee be released from the NLI?

#### Release Request:

A request for release must be initiated by the NLI signee by submitting the NLI Release Request online.

An institution may release a signee from his or her NLI obligation by selecting the "Complete Release" option on the NLI Release Request. It is the institution's discretion to grant a release or not.

The NLI release cannot include conditions to be released to specific institutions.

The **NLI Recruiting Ban** is lifted once an NLI signee submits an NLI Release Request.

#### Appeal Process:

For consideration of an appeal, the signee must present extenuating circumstances to the NLI Committee.

Completing a playing season does not fulfill the NLI obligation. The entire academic year at the signing institution must be completed.

4-4 transfers are no longer prospective student-athletes. Four-year transfers shall not sign NLIs, including international college/university transfers.

The NCAA manages the daily operations of the NLI program while the Division I Collegiate Commissioners Association provides governance oversight.

#### NLI Membership

651 NCAA Division I and II institutions are NLI members.

Not NLI members:

Ivy League, Service Academies, Division III institutions, NAIA institutions, preparatory schools and two-year colleges.

All members of the NLI program are required to offer athletics scholarships.

### Coaching Contact Prohibited at Time of Signing

A coach or institutional representative may not hand deliver the NLI off campus or be present off campus at the time of signing. The NLI may be delivered by express mail, regular mail, email, fax, mobile applications or any other electronic means.

An institution is not permitted to provide release agreements to a prospective student-athlete prior to signing.

The NLI penalty does not preclude a student-athlete from receiving athletics aid or practicing while serving the one academic year of residence for the NLI penalty.

### Early Signing Period Penalties

Prospective student-athletes who will participate in football are prohibited from signing an NLI during a signing date earlier than the initial signing date for Division I or II football. A student who signs an NLI during an earlier signing date in a sport other than football will be ineligible for competition in the sport of football during the student's first year of enrollment at an NLI member institution, and shall forfeit one season of competition in the sport of football.

In circumstances where a student's primary sport is not football, but anticipates participating in football, the student should delay signing an NLI until either the football signing period or a later signing date for the other sport.

### Enrollment in a Junior College (Two-Year College) - After Signing an NLI

If a prospective student-athlete signs an NLI and later attends a junior college, the prospective student-athlete must graduate from the junior college under the following conditions:

- To satisfy NCAA 2-4 or 4-2-4 transfer rules, if necessary to meet NCAA, conference or institutional regulations.
- To fulfill a previously signed NLI. In this case, the previous NLI is considered fulfilled if the prospective student-athlete graduates from the junior college. The NLI can be signed prior to graduation.

### Enrollment in a Junior College (Two-Year College) - No Previously Signed NLI

If a prospective student-athlete did not sign an NLI prior to enrolling at a junior college, he or she is permitted to sign while attending a junior college.

The following rule applies for Division I:

A nonqualifier 2-4 transfer is not permitted to sign an NLI in the first year of junior college enrollment. A nonqualifier in the first year of enrollment does not meet the NCAA requirement to receive athletics aid until attending the junior college for at least three semesters or four quarters.

### Athletics Aid Agreement

An NLI must be accompanied by an athletics aid agreement. A prospective student-athlete not receiving athletics aid is not permitted to sign an NLI. If the prospective student-athlete declines the athletics aid in order to receive other institutional aid, the NLI must be declared null and void. The athletics aid agreement is subject to NCAA rules.

If the NLI is declared **invalid, null and void** or a **complete release** is granted, a prospective student-athlete **is permitted** to sign another NLI in the same NLI signing year.

If a prospective student-athletes signs an NLI for enrollment in the upcoming academic year, but decides to not enroll, the NLI remains binding.