

Determining NCAA Expected Date of Graduation

United Kingdom

PURPOSE

To participate at an NCAA Division I, II or III school, you must receive an athletics certification in your sport. The athletics eligibility determination includes certification of the delayed-enrollment legislation, which is based on your expected date of high school graduation. Academic documents are needed to determine the applicable graduation date.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

1. The date you initially enrolled in year nine (e.g., September 2024).
2. All forms of proof of graduation, academic credentials and diplomas (e.g., GCSEs, A-levels, BTEC) you earned (as listed in the [Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#)).

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

- » Every graduation date is determined by counting forward from the date you initially started year nine.
 - This is when GCSEs are earned, which is the first tier of "graduation" for NCAA-eligibility purposes.
- » Everyone's graduation date from the UK will be three, four or five years from that date.
- » To determine which timeline you have earned, you must look at the timeline set for each approved type of certificate/diploma in the [Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#).

Tier 1: Sets the graduation date at Year 3

Tier 2: Sets the graduation date at Year 4.

Tier 3: Sets the graduation date at Year 5.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Year Nine (Year 1 for NCAA purposes)	Year 2	Year 3 (Tier 1)	Year 4 (Tier 2)	Year 5 Maximum Timeline (Tier 3)
(Insert year nine start date e.g. 2024-25)	(List the next school year e.g. 2025-26)	(List the next school year e.g. 2026-27)	(List the next school year e.g. 2027-28)	(List the next school year e.g. 2028-29)

Note: Once you start year nine, the counting forward of school years does not stop or pause.

Example: Callum started year nine in September 2024 (2024-25 school year).

Year Nine (Year 1 for NCAA purposes)
2024-25

Callum plans to complete seven GCSEs in May and June 2027 (results will come out in August 2027). The [Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#) shows GCSEs are a Tier 1 form of proof of high school graduation.

Year Nine (Year 1 for NCAA purposes)	Year 2	Year 3 (Tier 1)
2024-25	2025-26	2026-27*
Example: Year 9 Report	Example: Year 10 GCSEs	Example: Year 11 GCSEs

*Callum's current NCAA expected date of graduation would be **June 1, 2027** (end of the 2026-27 academic year).

After his GCSE's, Callum plans to earn an OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma. The [Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#) shows this is a Tier 2 form of proof of high school graduation.

Year Nine (Year 1 for NCAA purposes)	Year 2	Year 3 (Tier 1)	Year 4 (Tier 2)
2024-25	2025-26	2026-27*	2027-28*
Example: Year 9 Report	Example: Year 10 GCSEs	Example: Year 11 GCSEs	Example: Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma

*Callum's current NCAA expected date of graduation would be **June 1, 2028** (end of the 2027-28 academic year).

If Callum were to enroll in an Advanced (A)-levels program instead (passing a minimum of two separate A-Level exams), his expected timeline would be as follows. (The [Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility](#) show this is a Tier 3 form of proof of high school graduation.)

Year Nine (Year 1 for NCAA purposes)	Year 2	Year 3 (Tier 1)	Year 4 (Tier 2)	Year 5 (Tier 3)
2024-25	2025-26	2026-27*	2027-28*	2028-29*
Example: Year 9 Report	Example: Year 10 GCSEs	Example: Year 11 GCSEs	Example: Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma	Example: A-levels study (Year 2 of 2)

*Callum's current NCAA expected date of graduation would be **June 1, 2029** (end of the 2028-29 academic year).

UNDERSTANDING THE NCAA "GRACE PERIOD" OR "GAP YEAR"

After your NCAA graduation date, you have a certain amount of time—a "grace period" or "gap year"—to enroll full time at any two- or four-year college or university. **If you do not enroll at the first opportunity after your grace period and continue to compete in organized competition, you will use a season of NCAA eligibility for each calendar year during which you continue to compete.** You also may be required to serve an academic year in residence at your NCAA school before you can compete. See the chart below for specific sport and division delayed-enrollment rules.

Sport	Division I Grace Period	Division II Grace Period*	Division III Grace Period*
Tennis (Men and Women)	Six months	12 months	12 months
Men's Ice Hockey	21st birthday	Two years	12 months
Skiing (Men and Women)	21st birthday	Two years**	12 months
All other sports	12 months	12 months	12 months

*Grace period immediately follows your NCAA expected date of graduation.

**Competition must be sanctioned by the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association or its international counterparts.

Based on the grace period chart above, if Callum's NCAA expected date of graduation was set at June 1, 2029, his grace period would be the following:

- » For soccer, the grace period would end on June 1, 2030. Callum would need to enroll full time at any two- or four-year college or university by fall 2030, or stop competing in organized competition for soccer.
- » For Division I tennis, the grace period would end on December 1, 2029 (six months from Callum's graduation date of June 1, 2029). Callum would need to enroll full time at any two- or four-year college or university by winter/spring 2030, or stop competing in organized competition for tennis.

If you are competing in organized competition after your NCAA expected date of graduation, communicate with the NCAA Division I or II school(s) recruiting you. See the [Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#) to learn how the NCAA defines "organized competition/participation."

MORE INFORMATION

More on NCAA delayed-enrollment legislation can be found in our [Division I, II](#) and [III](#) manuals. Please refer to the following NCAA Bylaws and resources:

- » [NCAA Division I Bylaw 12.6.3.2.1](#) (sports other than men's ice hockey, skiing and tennis).
- » [NCAA Division I Bylaw 12.6.3.2.2](#) (tennis).
- » NCAA Division II Bylaw 14.4.3.4.2 (participation in organized competition before initial collegiate enrollment).
- » NCAA Division III Bylaw 12.1.4 (Amateurism status-before initial full-time collegiate enrollment).