



NCAA DIVISION III PROVISIONAL MEMBER PROCESS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I. Definition.

Question No. 1: What is a provisional member institution?

Answer: A provisional member institution is a four-year college or university, or a two-year upper-level collegiate institution accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency and that has applied for active membership in the NCAA (NCAA Division III Bylaw 20.02.3.2).

If your institution fits this description, please scroll to Section III (Division III Provisional Member Process).

II. Division III Membership Application Process.

Question No. 2: How does an institution apply for membership?

Answer: An institution shall submit an application for membership to the national office. The form shall be received in the national office not later than February 1.

Question No. 3: What is the process for becoming a member?

Answer: Following submission of the application, the NCAA Division III Membership Committee will determine if an institution is accepted into the provisional membership process or the exploratory year.

Question No. 4: What are the standards that an institution must meet with their application for membership?

Answer: An institution must satisfy all the following at the time of application:

1. Participation in an exploratory year unless the institution:
 - a. Meets the minimum sport-sponsorship requirements in the year preceding the first year of provisional membership; and
 - b. The institution attests that in the first provisional year, that it will not award athletically related financial aid to any student that participates in athletics. The institution may honor previously awarded athletically related financial aid to students that choose not to participate in athletics.

2. Receipt of a bona fide invitation for membership from an active Division III multisport conference. A conference affiliation shall be maintained during the Division III membership process.
3. Satisfactory completion of a viability statement describing the institution's commitment to the Division III philosophy statement. The Membership Committee shall make available the viability statement form as part of the provisional member application.
4. Sponsorship by an active Division III member, including the establishment of a good faith mentoring relationship and submission of a letter of recommendation signed by the sponsoring institution's chancellor or president, athletics director, senior woman administrator and faculty athletics representative; and
5. Demonstration of a functioning compliance system. The Membership Committee shall make available the athletics department profile as part of the provisional member application.

III. Division III Provisional Membership Process.

Question No. 5: How long is the entire process to join Division III?

Answer: If an institution does not meet Bylaw 20.10.2.1.3-(a)(1-2) the institution may participate in an exploratory year; and then complete three years within the provisional membership process (Bylaw 20.10.4.) Institutions reclassifying from Divisions I or II are not required to serve an exploratory year.

Question No. 6: When is the application for provisional membership due?

Answer: For an institution intending to be a provisional member for the upcoming academic year, the provisional membership application is due not later than February 1. The application for provisional membership will be made available by staff.

Question No. 7: Is there a cost associated with the provisional membership process?

Answer: At the time of approval of the application for provisional membership, the institution will be invoiced a \$1,000 nonrefundable fee and given 30 days to pay it. A provisional member institution must pay a nonrefundable fee of \$39,000 for the provisional member education program. The fee is due by September 1 of the first year of the provisional membership process. This

educational fee covers travel and other expenses for NCAA staff and Membership Committee members. It also funds staff time and material costs associated with the provisional/reclassifying membership program. It is important to note a provisional member institution must also pay NCAA annual dues during each year of the provisional membership process (Bylaws 20.10.2.1.2 and 20.13).

Question No. 8: How many institutions are accepted as provisional member each year?

Answer: There is a maximum of four institutions admitted to the provisional membership process in any one year, and a maximum of 12 provisional institutions participating in the program in total. (Bylaw 20.10.3).

Question No. 9: Does an institution applying for provisional membership require an offer of conference membership?

Answer: Yes. An institution whose provisional membership process will begin during or after the 2024-25 academic year is required to have a bona fide invitation from an active Division III multisport conference before applying for Division III membership. To satisfy this requirement, the institution may use a memorandum, signed by the chair of the chancellors and presidents' group or appropriate designee of the conference, as evidence of the active member conference's offer to become a full member upon the institution becoming an active Division III members.

For additional information regarding this requirement, see Appendix A.

Question No. 10: When is an institution notified of its status to participate in the provisional membership process?

Answer: An institution is notified of its status to participate in the provisional membership process following the Division III Membership Committee's meeting held every February.

Question No. 11: When does an institution officially begin the provisional membership process?

Answer: September 1 following acceptance by the Membership Committee into the provisional membership process. For example, if the Membership Committee accepts an institution into the provisional membership process in February 2025, the institution's official start date of the provisional membership process is September 1, 2025.

Question No. 12: Is an institution required to publicly announce its participation in the provisional membership process? If so, when?

Answer: The Presidents Council requests (but does not require) an institution to publicly announce its provisional membership to provide transparency for all institutional stakeholders, and to ensure all prospective and current student-athletes are aware of potential athletically related financial aid implications. Public announcements may be issued once an institution is accepted by the Membership Committee to participate in the provisional membership process.

Question No. 13: Is an institution in the provisional membership process considered a Division III member institution?

Answer: Yes. Provisional membership is a class of Division III membership (Bylaw 20.01.2).

Question No. 14: Must a provisional member institution adhere to Division III legislation? If so, when?

Answer: Yes. Beginning September 1 of the first year of provisional membership and thereafter, a provisional member institution must administer its athletics program in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and other legislation of the NCAA and of Division III (Bylaw 20.10.5. In recognition of differing academic calendars at various institutions, during the summer prior to the start of the first year of provisional membership, the institution is encouraged to begin applying Division III legislation no later than the first day of preseason practice, the first day of classes, or September 1, whichever is earliest.

Question No. 15: When must a provisional member institution stop honoring athletics scholarships?

Answer: A provisional member institution shall not award athletically related financial aid to incoming students (e.g., first-year; transfer) beginning with the first year of the provisional membership process and thereafter (Bylaw 20.10.5.1). Following the completion of year two, a provisional member institution may no longer award athletically related financial aid to any student and must comply with all financial aid requirements set forth in Bylaw 15.3. There is a "Financial Aid Transition Breakdown" chart available on the Division III Membership webpage under the "Provisional and Reclassifying Resources" section.

Question No. 16: When must a provisional institution submit the Division III annual electronic financial aid report?

Answer: During the second year of provisional membership (and each subsequent year), a provisional member institution must complete the Division III financial aid annual electronic reporting process (Bylaws 15.3.1.1 and 20.10.5.1). The data submitted in the fall of year two describes the financial aid packages awarded during year one of provisional membership.

Question No. 17: May a provisional member institution use the registered marks of the NCAA (i.e., the NCAA name, logo or other insignia)? If so, when?

Answer: Yes (Bylaw 20.10.9.2). Once an institution is accepted into provisional membership, indicated by the receipt of the letter of acceptance, the institution may use the NCAA name, logo or other insignia.

Question No. 18: Is a provisional member institution required to attend the NCAA Convention and/or NCAA Regional Rules Seminars each year?

Answer: Yes. A provisional member institution's chancellor or president (other institutional guests are welcome) is required to attend the NCAA Convention during the first year of the provisional membership process and during any subsequent year in which there is a change in presidential leadership. A provisional member institution's director of athletics (other institutional guests are welcome) is required to attend the NCAA Convention and NCAA Regional Rules Seminars each year.

Question No. 19: What programming is required during attendance at the NCAA Convention?

Answer: During the NCAA Convention, a provisional member institution's chancellor or president and director of athletics (other institutional guests are welcome) are required to attend the following Convention sessions: Division III New Member Session, the Division III Issues Forum and the Division III Business Session.

Question No. 20: May a provisional member institution vote at the NCAA Division III Business Session at Convention?

Answer: No. Only active Division III member institutions may vote at the NCAA Division III Business Session at Convention.

Question No. 21: When is a provisional member institution eligible for Division III grant programs?

Answer: Provisional member institutions in year three may participate in the Student-Athlete Regional Leadership Conference within their respective region and are eligible to receive NCAA funding to attend the conference. The decision of whether provisional member institutions may receive access to conference grant funding is left to the discretion of their conferences. Provisional member institutions are not considered in the determination of the allocation of conference grant funds to each conference; however, conferences that have provisional member institutions may choose to share grant resources with those member institutions.

Question No. 22: Does a provisional member institution count as a Division III opponent for championships selection purposes?

Answer: Yes (Bylaw 31.3.2.2) provisional institutions count towards Division III championships criteria for their opponents beginning in the academic year following the institution's attestation of full compliance with Division III bylaws. This includes the institution attesting that no student participating in athletics has been awarded athletically related financial aid and their policies and procedures for administering the student financial aid program comply with Bylaw 15. As part of the provisional/reclassifying application or the year one annual report, the institution will undergo a Level II review by the Division III Financial Aid Committee. Please see the "Championship Selection Criteria for Reclassifying and Provisional Institutions" chart found on the Division III Membership page under the "Provisional and Reclassifying Resources" section for further details.

Question No. 23: Is a provisional member institution eligible for NCAA championships?

Answer: No.

Question No. 25: If a provisional member institution is a member of a conference, may the institution compete in the conference championship?

Answer: It depends on the rules and policies of the particular conference.

Question No. 26: Is a provisional member institution eligible for NCAA catastrophic-injury insurance?

Answer: A provisional member institution is not eligible for NCAA catastrophic-injury insurance. However, a provisional member institution must certify insurance coverage for medical expenses resulting from athletically related injuries sustained by a student-athlete participating in a covered event in an intercollegiate sport as recognized by the participating institution. Covered benefits are described in Bylaw 20.8.4.3.2 and include such events as team travel, competition, practice and conditioning sessions. Such insurance coverage must be of equal or greater value than the \$90,000 deductible of the NCAA catastrophic-injury insurance and may be provided through the participant's personal insurance coverage or the institution's insurance program.

Question No. 27: May athletics department staff or student-athletes at a provisional member institution serve on a Division III committee?

Answer: No.

Question No. 28: May a provisional member institution maintain membership in other athletics associations?

Answer: Yes, if the other athletics association allows it. However, a provisional member institution must ensure compliance with Division III legislation.

Question No. 29: Is there any information that a provisional member institution must provide to the national office statistics staff?

Answer: Provisional member institutions must submit score reporting to the national office statistics staff during each of the three years of provisional membership. The NCAA statistics staff contacts institutions via email at the beginning of each season and outlines which requirements are expected of all institutions.

Question No. 30: Is there a way for an institution to reduce the three-year provisional membership process?

Answer: No.

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Text:

Effective Date: For institutions, whose provisional or reclassifying membership process will begin during or after the 2024-25 academic year.

Source: NCAA Division III Presidents Council [Management Council (Membership Committee)].

Intent: To require an institution to have a bona fide invitation from an active Division III conference before applying for Division III membership and maintain a conference affiliation during the Division III membership process.

General Application.

Question No. 1: How does this proposal change the current rule?

Answer: This is a new requirement. It would require an institution to have a bona fide invitation from an active Division III multi-sport conference before applying for Division III membership. The institution must maintain a conference affiliation during the Division III membership process.

Question No. 2: Can an institution without a Division III conference invitation apply for Division III membership?

Answer: No. The bona fide invitation from a conference is part of the application process.

Question No. 3: What is considered a bona fide invitation from a conference?

Answer: To satisfy this requirement, the institution may use a memorandum, signed by the chair of the chancellors and presidents' group or appropriate designee of the conference, as evidence of the active member conference's offer to become a full member upon the institution becoming an active Division III members.

Question No. 4: Does the provisional or reclassifying member have to maintain an affiliation with the same conference during the Division III membership process?

Answer: No. The institution may change their conference affiliation during the membership process.

Question No. 5: If an institution loses their conference affiliation, can the institution move forward through the provisional or reclassifying membership process?

Answer: Yes. However, failure to maintain a conference affiliation throughout the duration of the membership process could result in the institution being required to repeat a year of the three-year membership process per Bylaw 20.10.8.3. If the failure to maintain a conference affiliation is due to circumstances beyond the control of the institution, the committee may consider those circumstances during its review of the institution's annual report. Finally, the institution must receive a new invitation from a conference to be eligible to apply for active membership.

Question No. 6: Do institutions applying for the exploratory year require a bona fide invitation from a conference?

Answer: No. Exploratory institutions will not need a conference invitation. However, it will be a requirement as part of the application to be a provisional member, so any exploratory institutions wanting to transition to provisional membership will need a bona fide invitation.

Question No. 7: Would this proposal allow an institution to become an active Division III member as an independent institution?

Answer: No. An institution without conference affiliation will not be invited into active Division III membership.

Question No. 8: Would this proposal affect current Division III independent institutions?

Answer: No.

Question No. 9: Do institutions currently in the membership process need a bona fide invitation from a conference?

Answer: No. The proposal, if adopted, would become effective for institutions starting the Division III provisional/reclassifying process in the 2024-25 academic year. Institutions that are currently provisional or reclassifying members would not need a conference affiliation to move forward with the membership process.

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Legislative References

Legislative Cite	Title
20.10.2.1.3	Standards for Application for Membership.
