

What is a Core Course

NCAA legislation guides the NCAA Eligibility Center staff in its review of core courses. This legislation requires that a course meet the following standards:

1. A core course must be an academic course that receives high school graduation credit in the following:
 - One or a combination of these areas: English, mathematics, natural/physical science; social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy.
2. Four-year college preparatory;
3. At or above your high school's regular academic level;
4. Algebra I or higher in the mathematics area; and
5. Taught by a qualified instructor.

What is NOT a Core Course

1. Courses in non-core areas or vocational courses: Driver's Ed, Keyboarding, Art, Music, Physical Education, Welding.
2. Courses that prepare students for the world of work or life, or for a two-year college or technical school. Examples include Personal Finance, Consumer Education, Tech Prep.
3. Courses that are taught below grade level, at a slower pace, with less rigor or depth. Examples include Basic, Essential, Fundamental or Foundations courses.
4. Courses that are not academic in nature. Examples include Film Study, Video Editing, Greenhouse Management.

Additional Tips

What courses can be submitted in the "additional" core area?

- Courses in foreign/world languages, philosophy, comparative religion, or American sign language.

What courses should NOT be submitted as "additional" core courses?

- Miscellaneous non-academic courses such as physical education, leadership/community service, driver's education, weight lifting, study skills, marching band, software applications, etc.

What about fine arts courses?

- Courses in art, music, dance, or acting/theater cannot be approved as NCAA core courses in any core area.

What about computer science courses?

- If the course (a) receives math or science graduation credit and (b) is an academic programming course or an AP course, it should be submitted in the appropriate core area (math or science), and not as an additional core course.
- If your school awards computer science courses technology credit only, the courses cannot be approved in any NCAA core area.
- Courses in software applications, spreadsheets, website construction, keyboarding, computer repair, or other tech-prep computer courses cannot be used as NCAA core courses.