

Partnership for Academic Competition Excellence

National Scholastic Championship
Official Eligibility Rules
Effective November 1, 2026

Eligibility changes effective beginning with the 2027 PACE NSC have been highlighted.

1. **Eligible players.** For the purposes of these rules, the terms "eligible player" and "student" are interchangeable. Eligible players at the PACE NSC must meet **both** of the following requirements:

    a. The player must be enrolled in 6th grade or a higher grade level for the academic year in which the NSC takes place, or be at least 12 years old by June 1 of the calendar year in which the NSC takes place. For the purposes of this rule, the NSC comes at the **end** of an academic year; e.g. eligible players for the 2027 NSC must be in 6th grade or higher during the 2026-27 academic year.

    b. The player must **not** have received a high school diploma or equivalent or higher degree **before March 1** of the calendar year in which the NSC takes place.

    c. PACE will keep a public list of players who have been granted special permissions to participate in the upcoming NSC that would otherwise be ineligible under these rules on the official PACE website. Exemptions under this rule will be granted exclusively for a single competition year and must be renewed each year.

2. **Schools.** Each student competes on a **team** representing a **school**.

    a. For the purposes of these rules, a "school" is any comprehensive, multi-subject high school which holds classes in at least one physical building and awards a high school diploma or equivalent upon completion.

    b. A student may only play for a team representing a school that they are currently enrolled in. A player enrolled in multiple schools at once, such as a public high school and a half-day magnet program, may choose to play for any school in which they are enrolled which provides a diploma upon graduation.

    c. Middle schools, and other institutions that do not award high school diplomas or equivalents, are not eligible for the NSC. Middle school students may not play for a high school team if the high school is a different school than their middle school, except in cases of multiple enrollment as specified in Eligibility Rule 2.b above.

    d. Students attending a school that teaches a wider range of grades than a typical high school -- for instance, a school that teaches Grades 6 through 12 -- may all play together for that same school, even if some of those students are of middle school age and some are of high school age. Any student that

has not yet begun Grade 9, but intends to play the NSC under this rule, must upload proof of enrollment upon submitting their roster forms.

e. Homeschooled students are eligible to qualify and play in the NSC by themselves or with other students attending the same physical homeschool. Homeschool associations are not eligible to register teams for the NSC unless they receive special dispensation from the tournament director ("TD"). A homeschool student who also receives a diploma from a conventional middle school or high school is eligible to play for that school so long as all other eligibility criteria are met by that player.

f. Online schools and distance-learning programs may be eligible to register for the NSC provided that all players on teams fielded by the online school or distance learning program live within the same area corresponding to a circle of diameter 50 miles. Any such online school or program must receive special dispensation from the TD before registering.

g. A student's enrollment in collegiate coursework or academic programs, and/or past history of competition in collegiate academic tournaments, shall have no effect on that student's eligibility so long as all other eligibility criteria are met. No student may play the PACE NSC on a team representing a college or other post secondary academic institution.

h. Students who have changed schools in the middle of the academic year, or who changed schools between academic years, must play for the school in which they are currently and/or most recently enrolled.

i. PACE will keep a public list of schools that have been granted special permissions to participate in the upcoming NSC that would otherwise be ineligible under Rules 2.a and 2.c on the official PACE website. Exemptions under this rule will be granted exclusively for a single competition year and must be renewed each year.

3. **Team composition.** A team's roster may consist of no fewer than one student(s) and **no more than eight students**. All students on a team must represent the same school. As specified in the gameplay rules, no more than four students may play for a given team in any given game at any given time, with the appropriate opportunities for substitution.

    a. **A student may play for only one team during the tournament**. Should a student on one team later play for another team, any team besides the first shall forfeit all games in which that student plays. Teams from the same school are considered distinct teams for the purpose of this rule and all other rules.

b. Under no circumstances will any team be permitted to compete in the NSC unless all members of that team are enrolled in a common school. As such, any "open," "all-star," or "chimeric" teams are barred from competing. Any team found to be violating this rule will automatically forfeit all its games across NSC weekend, including retroactive forfeits of any games that it may have already played.

4. **Adult chaperones.** Each school attending the PACE NSC must be accompanied by at least one non-competing adult who is at least 21 years of age by the start of the tournament ("chaperone"). This person may be the school's quizbowl coach, a teacher or administrator at the school, a parent or legal guardian, or another volunteer. There is no need for each separate team from a school to be accompanied by a distinct chaperone while the competition is ongoing. Under certain circumstances, non-player legal adults who are not yet 21 years of age *may* be allowed to chaperone a team provided they receive special dispensation from the tournament director.

5. **Rosters.** A complete roster of the players competing on each participating team, as well as the coach and/or chaperone for that team, shall be **submitted in advance** of the tournament to the TD or the TD's officially-specified delegate(s). Teams may revise their rosters at any point up to their official check-in on the evening before or morning of the tournament, and may verify their roster at their official check-in. The roster on file at the time of the Opening Meeting will be considered the team's official roster for all purposes.

    a. It is the responsibility of each participating team to ensure that their roster is compliant with the PACE eligibility rules. Failure of a team to ensure all of its players are eligible is punishable by disqualification before, during, or after the tournament at the discretion of the TD without refund or other compensation.

    b. Official rosters must use legal names or recognized abbreviations thereof ("real names") in order for tournament staff to enforce eligibility, substitution, and scheduling rules, as well as to ensure the accurate compilation of statistics. Aliases and/or pseudonyms are not permitted without special dispensation from the TD.

    c. Each school must compete under its real name unless given special dispensation from the TD to compete under an alias and/or pseudonym. All teams representing a given school must compete under the same name.

    d. If a school has multiple teams competing at the NSC, it must submit the rosters of those teams with a single-letter designation of "A," "B," "C," etc. ascribed to each team, such that the "A" team represents the most skilled or

accomplished team, the "B" team represents the next-most skilled or accomplished team, and so on. PACE reserves the right to reassign labels if it believes a school has failed to designate its teams properly.

e. Any teams or students which receive special dispensation to compete under an alias and/or a pseudonym must honestly report their real names to PACE if asked by the TD or the TD's officially-specified delegate(s) prior to in-person check-in.

f. Any player participating or intending to participate in the NSC must be able and willing to provide enrollment documents clearly showing their enrollment at the school they are set to compete for upon tournament director request. Examples of such documents include but are not limited to report cards, transcripts, etc.

6. **Finality.** All judgments regarding eligibility, including judgments which are not covered in these rules, are at the TD's discretion and are final.