



— NSCA —

COLLEGIATE PROGRAM OF

DISTINCTION



APPLICATION BOOKLET



NSCA Collegiate Program of Distinction

Recognition For Excellence in College and University Strength and Conditioning

College and university strength and conditioning programs that exemplify the highest standards of excellence are recognized through the NSCA Collegiate Program of Distinction. This prestigious honor is awarded to institutions that apply and meet the criteria established by the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

Recognition as an NSCA Collegiate Program of Distinction is granted for a three-year period, provided there is no change in the institution's verified strength and conditioning coach. Programs must renew after the three-year period expires to maintain recognition.

The application process evaluates several key components of strength and conditioning program administration, including:

- **Program Supervision**
- **Coaching Mentorship**
- **Strength and Conditioning Program Administration**
- **Facility Management**



Steps to Apply

Step One: Download and save this Application Booklet.

Step Two: Fill in your school's information across the four major areas.

Step Three: Get signatures from your athletic department administrator or athletic director on each of the four score sheets, as noted in the application.

Step Four: Scan and email the completed packet with the required support materials to schoolofdistinction@NSCA.com.

- **Applications are processed on a rolling basis:**
Each May, the NSCA announces an annual list of recognized programs schools that received recognition. Submit your application by February 15 for guaranteed review and approval by May 1 of that school year.
- You may also mail your completed application with your contact information to:
*National Strength and Conditioning Association
c/o Collegiate Program of Distinction
1885 Bob Johnson Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80906*

Step Five: You will receive email confirmation upon receipt of your application. Once we review your application, you will receive another email confirming or denying your Collegiate Program of Distinction status. As part of the program, the required program fee includes the purchase and shipping of a championship-style banner to display your achievement in the gym or the weightroom.

Upon notification:

- The \$300 NSCA Collegiate Program of Distinction Fee will be charged to your NSCA account. You will be given instructions to settle this charge before receiving your certificate. You will receive a digital NSCA Collegiate Program of Distinction Certificate. This email will be sent from NSCA's credentialing partner, Accredible. The linked certificate can be printed for display in your facility.
- You will also receive a digital badge from Accredible that can be included in your email signature and on social media platforms to share your accomplishment.



Recognized Programs Receive:
*Championship-Style Banner,
Certificate of Recognition, and
Email and Website Badge*



Collegiate Program of Distinction Requirements

Program Supervision Requirements

The school's Director or Head Strength and Conditioning Coach who submits the application must meet the following requirements:

- Current NSCA Member
- Current CSCS Certification
- Current RSCC, RSCC*D, or RSCC*E designation
- CPR/AED Certified
- Full time employed by College or University. Verification may be required.

All additional full-time strength and conditioning staff/assistant strength and conditioning coaches in the department must meet the following requirements:

- Current NSCA member (Required)
- Completion of USADA Coach's Advantage Course (Required)
- Completion of the U.S. Center for SafeSport® – "SafeSport Trained" Course (Required; Submit proof with application)
- CPR/AED Certified (Required)
- NCCA Accredited "Strength and Conditioning" Certification (Required; CSCS Certification preferred; Submit proof with application)

Coaching Mentorship

The following are requirements related to the administration of a strength and conditioning staff-continuing education and internship programs.

- Health and Safety Meetings (Required):** Head strength and conditioning coach must conduct semesterly health and safety meeting with all staff, including graduate assistants, interns, part-time, and volunteers. The meeting should include education topics such as, but not limited to, emergency action plans and procedures, exercise spotting technique, weight room coverage and supervision, the administration of workouts and conditioning during transition periods (See NSCA/CSCCa Joint Consensus Statement), supplements, nutrition, and performance enhancing drug prevention, and the prevention of sudden death and catastrophic events.

Administrator Initial _____

- Internship Program (Required):** Manage a strength and conditioning internship program at your institution for a minimum of one intern per academic year over a three-year period (or 3 interns per application). A list of all interns first name, last name, and term should be listed with your application .

Intern Name	Term

Administrator Initial _____

- Internship Curriculum (Required):** Implement a semester-long internship curriculum at your institution including a field manual, relevant resources, and materials for strength and conditioning interns. As a guide, use the NSCA Strength and Conditioning Field Experience and Internship Manual.

Internships must minimally include the following key areas: warm-up and flexibility training, exercise technique, safety procedures and spotting, test selection and administration, periodization and program design, power-based training (e.g., Olympic-style lifting, plyometrics), and speed and agility. Program materials must be submitted with your application and include proficiency checks and intern evaluation forms.

Administrator Initial _____

- Continuing Education Resources (Required):** Provide a dedicated department budget for staff continuing education. This budget should be available for full-time staff members to attend conferences and/or take relevant educational courses in support of coaching and professional development. Choose one of the options below based on the support provided by your department.

- » **Option 1 (preferred):** Our department provides a continuing education stipend/budget available for full-time coaches on staff in the amount of \$ _____ (*enter amount*) each year. This continuing education budget may be used at the discretion of the coach to cover the costs of recertification, conferences, and relevant educational courses beyond that offered as part of normal staff training or in-services.

Administrator Initial _____

- » **Option 2:** Our department covers continuing education expenses for individual coaches on staff as part of a collective budget or as determined on a case-by-case basis. For this option, provide a list below or attach all relevant continuing education for each full-time staff member over the past calendar year. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

*A minimum of 20 hours of educational content is required annually per staff member. This is the equivalent of 2.0 NSCA CEUs per year (0.1 CEUs per contact hour).

Name	Activity/Course	Hours

Administrator Initial _____

- Annual Performance Evaluation (Required):** Provide all full-time staff and assistants with an annual performance evaluation to help guide performance improvement. Incorporate recommendations for specific areas for improvement and development.

Administrator Initial _____



Complete Three of the Following

The next section includes additional areas to enhance coaching mentorship across your department. Each department must conduct at least three of the following coaching mentorship and leadership activities over the three-year application period (previous three-years for new applicants).

This requirement is intended to enhance strength and conditioning and professional development education and place the strength and conditioning department in a position of leadership at their institution.

- Host NSCA Events:** Host an NSCA State or Regional Clinic at your facility

Event Date _____

- Present at NSCA Events:** Present at an NSCA State, Regional, or National Conference.

Event Date _____ Presenter's Name _____

- Strength and Conditioning Clinic (non-NSCA):** Host a public Strength and Conditioning Clinic at your facility approved for NSCA CEUs as part of the Approved CEU Provider program.

Event Date _____

- Foundations of Coaching Lifts:** Teach the NSCA Foundations of Coaching Lifts (FCL) Course at your weight room. This requires initially becoming an NSCA FCL course instructor.

Event Date _____ Instructor's Name _____

- NSCA Volunteer:** Volunteer on an NSCA Committee, Professional Development Group (PDG), Special Interest Group (SIG), State-Provincial Program, or in another recognized volunteer role. Provide a list of names(s) and NSCA involvement:

Volunteer Name	NSCA Involvement

- New RSCC:** For first-time applicants on your staff, join the RSCC program. Provide name(s) of these coaches below. Learn more at NSCA.com/RSCC.

RSCC Applicant Name

- Coaching Staff Professional Development:** Host a staff professional development in-service that enhances staff development beyond the scope of traditional strength and conditioning education. Examples may include financial planning or team building activities. Provide examples of materials from these sessions with your application.

Administrator Initial _____

- Campus Outreach:** Provide opportunities for undergraduate/graduate students (including non-athletes) to observe and learn from certified strength and conditioning staff in the weight room environment. This may include contributing to courses within the academic exercise science/ kinesiology department or support for on-campus club sports and recreation programs. Provide a description of the activities performed with your application.

Administrator Initial _____

- K-12/High School Outreach:** Provide outreach to local K-12 students that explains the role and impact of strength and conditioning for the benefit of scholastic student-athletes at the K-12 or collegiate levels. Provide a description of the activities performed with your application.

Administrator Initial _____

- NSCA Foundation Coaching Mentorship Program for RSCC*D and RSCC*E Coaches:** Provide mentorship through the NSCA Foundation Coaching Mentorship Program as an RSCC*D or RSCC*E. Learn more at NSCA.com/coachingadvancementprogram/.

Administrator Initial _____

Coach's Name	Mentee's Name	Year/Term

- Serving Non-traditional Programs:** Provide strength and conditioning services to programs not typically serviced by collegiate strength and conditioning departments. This may include dance teams, marching band, ROTC, adaptive sports, or other groups. Provide a list below:

Activity	Term

Administrator Initial _____

- Other:** Provide documentation or explanation related to another area completed by your staff that supports Coaching Mentorship within strength and conditioning.

Administrator Initial _____

Additional Program Requirements

- Cover Letter:** Attach a separate cover letter with your Collegiate Program of Distinction application explaining your department’s overall program philosophy. Training program examples may be attached with your application and must follow the basic principles of training and technique progression as described by the NSCA. Include affirmation that this letter was shared with your department administrator.

Administrator Initial _____

- Orientation & Safety:** Conduct new and returning student orientation and safety meetings each term (document dates below).

» Orientation meetings that emphasize weight room safety are mandatory with new and returning participants prior to the use of the weight room each term. NSCA Standards and Guidelines can be used as an outline.

Documented Student Orientation & Safety Meeting Dates			
	Semester 1 (Fall)	Semester 2 (Spring)	Summer Programs/Other
Year 1			
Year 2			
Year3			

Administrator Initial _____

- Coach-Athlete Ratios:** All strength and conditioning activities are pre-planned to include the requisite number of qualified staff (certified coaches) according to the NSCA’s Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines. The requirements at the collegiate level to be verified include a minimum of a 1:20 certified coach-athlete ratio for any strength and conditioning activity, including during peak-usage times.

Also, in accordance with NSCA’s Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines, increased supervision should be provided for all novices, special populations, or participants engaged in complex movement strength and conditioning activities (e.g., multi-joint compound lifts, Olympic Weightlifting lifts and variations).

Administrator Initial _____

- Participate in NSCA All-American Athlete Program:** Nominate at least two student-athletes from your program within the past three years (annual participation preferred). List athlete names and years. International universities are exempt from this requirement.

Name	Year Nominated

Administrator Initial _____

Facility Management Requirements

Photos: Attach 4-6 photos of your weight room facility demonstrating the following:

- Appropriate safety equipment and equipment spacing.
- Appropriate weight room signage.
- Appropriate access for students and staff with disabilities.
- Weight room cleanliness and organization.

Refer to the NSCA's Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning textbook as a reference. Include affirmation that these photos were shared with your school administrator. Do not include pictures of students and any individuals not granting permission to be photographed.

Administrator Initial _____

Affirmation: Minimum average floor space of 100 square feet per person in all training spaces, including all participants, staff, medical support, coaches, and administrators who are present during training.

Administrator Initial _____

Affirmation: Emergency procedures and weight room rules (emphasizing safety) are posted with appropriate signage in each strength and conditioning facility before any activity.

Administrator Initial _____

Affirmation: All weight room equipment is well maintained by staff, including scheduled inspection, regular maintenance, and cleaning according to NSCA standards. Evidence of this may include cleaning and maintenance charts or other documentation to be shared with your school administrator.

Administrator Initial _____

Affirmation: The temperature of the weight room is between 68 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit (20-26 degrees Celcius), and humidity is maintained at less than 60%.

Administrator Initial _____

Affirmation: The facility contains a variety of lifting bars to accommodate different ages and strength levels (e.g., 11 lbs, 33 lbs, and standard), collars, safety bars, and/or lifting platforms (or a designated area) with bumper plates for Olympic-style lifting.

Administrator Initial _____

Affirmation: It is strongly recommended that anyone using this facility outside of the normal team training schedule should have a current physical or waiver on file prior to participation as per NSCA Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines.

Administrator Initial _____

Final Affirmation and Signatures

By signing below, I affirm that the information contained in this application for the NSCA Collegiate Program of Distinction Recognition is true and accurate.

Department Administrator

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Director/Head Strength and Conditioning Coach

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

