

HOSA APPENDIX I

HOSA MEMBERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

HOSA seeks to provide learning opportunities and leadership experiences for all HOSA members, including those who have special needs. The mission of HOSA clearly directs that HOSA opportunities should be available to all HOSA members:

*The **mission of HOSA** is to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill and leadership development of all health science education students, therefore, helping students to meet the needs of the health care community.*

There are times when the needs of HOSA members require additions to conference services or modifications to competitive events. HOSA provides reasonable services and modifications in keeping with a set of general principles.

General Principles for Services and Modifications at HOSA Conferences

1. **Request Process:** At the state and international level, requests for services and modifications must be made in writing by the published conference registration deadline, following the instructions in the event guidelines. This allows HOSA the opportunity to make the appropriate arrangements. When costs are involved, it is important that HOSA has enough time to access the most appropriate and responsible resources available.
2. **Personal Services:** When additional, specially trained personnel are required, local school systems are asked to provide those services. HOSA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Delegate registration fees are collected to cover expected conference expenses and keep the individual cost per student at a minimum.
3. **General Approval Exception:** Requests for additional services and modifications are almost always approved, EXCEPT when the service or modification presents an unreasonable expense to HOSA, or when an event modification gives the member an advantage in the competition or puts the other students at a disadvantage.
4. **State Level Modifications:** For services and modifications at the international level, the same service/modification must have been provided at the state level. When extra costs are involved, the state association is encouraged to coordinate the provision of services with HOSA-Future Health Professionals.
5. **Individual Education Plan:** Four events are offered exclusively for students who have an IEP – Life Support Skills, Interviewing Skills, Personal Care, and Speaking Skills. These four events are exclusively for HOSA members who are classified under the provision of the 2004 reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). HOSA members with 504 classification are NOT eligible to compete in HOSA's special needs events. Students with special needs are also invited to participate in all other HOSA competitive

events, and to request modification without presenting an IEP. HOSA members who do not have an IEP may still request reasonable accommodation for competitive events.

Modification Determination Process

When determining how best to meet the needs of members with special needs, the following questions are addressed:

1. Can the member compete in the planned event setting?
2. Does the member who is given special consideration gain an advantage in the competition?
3. Does the member who is given special consideration cause the other competitors to work at a disadvantage?
4. Does the modification allow the competitor to meet acceptable health skill standards?

Modification Examples

The following examples illustrate the modifications made by state organizations and HOSA-Future Health Professionals in the past, and are provided to illustrate the accommodations that have and have not been made in the past. This list is not all-inclusive, and other reasonable accommodations can be made if they fall within the guidelines described in this policy brief.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Most HOSA conference sites are wheelchair accessible. As with all modifications, notification of the need for wheelchair access must be made in writing by the conference registration deadline.

Proper advance notification allows the state and HOSA-Future Health Professionals the opportunity to, for example, build a ramp to the stage for the awards session and to arrange special transportation options if an event is held off-site.

EXTENDED TIME

Many IEPs request “more time” for students in completing cognitive tasks. In written tests, extra time can be provided. In HOSA’s special needs events, extra time is built into the job application portion of Interviewing Skills. In HOSA’s special needs events, extra time is NOT provided for skill performances.

Industry standards require that skills, such as Life Support Skills, be performed following specified time frames. The timing is an integral part of the performance and should not be adjusted.

UNREASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The skills in skill events are designed to help HOSA members learn and master specific health skills, based on industry standards. Competitors may not verbalize the skills steps (except as noted in the event guidelines) or be excused from the performance of a skill due to physical limitations.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING DELEGATES

HOSA will provide translators as needed to allow non-English speaking members to participate in HOSA competitive events if a request is made in writing by May 15.

Translators are not provided for all conference activities, (i.e. educational symposiums, leadership academies, and tours) however, certain exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

HOSA will print tests in extra-large font and will allow competitors to use a magnifying glass. If needed, HOSA will provide a quiet room and a reader if the test needs to be read out loud.

Other accommodations can be made, depending on the dynamics of a specific event and the needs of the competitor.

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

When competitors communicate with sign language, they are permitted to bring their interpreter to sign for them in events and conference sessions. Special seating arrangements will be made to accommodate the need for delegates and their translator. If the school system or state does not provide an interpreter for the international conference, HOSA will have one available for competitions and the Opening General Session if the request is received by May 15 with conference registration.

Interpreters are not provided for all conference activities (i.e. educational symposiums, leadership academies and tours) however, certain exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to ensuring that the proper accommodations are made by HOSA for members with special conference and event needs. Communication begins with the local chapter advisor.

The chapter advisor is in a position to understand the specific needs of the HOSA member, as well as the guidelines for a specific event. He/she can work with the student to determine what event and conference activities are most desired, and then develop a plan to help that student participate at his/her fullest potential. Sometimes, school officials will be a part of the process in determining how to best meet the student's needs.

Once the local advisor has a plan, he/she should communicate, in writing, a request for the HOSA member with special needs, following the instructions outlined in the event guidelines.

There are careers in health for ALL students, and opportunities in HOSA for ALL students. Our goal is always to achieve a positive experience for students and an opportunity to help each individual student achieve his or her career goals.