

## HARDSHIP WAIVER AND OTHER EXCEPTIONS

### I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to participate at an OSSAA member school in athletic events a student must:

- A. Be legally enrolled in a secondary school grade level at a member school in courses, activities, or alternative programs in which credits are being earned, and appropriate academic progress is being made toward graduation consistent with the requirements of the school and the State Department of Education.
- B. Have on file with the school an *OSSAA Eligibility Record Form* completed at the time the student first enrolled in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. An *Eligibility Record Form* should be completed prior to participation each year after entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- C. Undergo an annual physical examination and have on file with the school a signed physical examination certificate or form as set forth by OSSAA Rule 1.
- D. Have concussion management paperwork completed and on file with the school.
- E. Have on file with the school a signed parental consent form as set forth in Rule 1.
- F. Comply with the attendance policies of the school district the student is attending.
- G. Comply with the minimum academic performance requirements as set forth in Rule 3.
- H. Comply with the standards for student conduct as set forth in Rule 4.
- I. Comply with the standards for maintaining amateur status as set forth in Rule 5.
- J. Comply with the Age Rule as set forth in Rule 1.
- K. Comply with the period of participation limits as set forth in Rule 7.
- L. Comply with all applicable laws and the Rules and Policies of the Association concerning participation, sportsmanship and conduct in connection with interscholastic athletics.

### II. GUIDELINES

At a minimum, a student must be in compliance with the following to be eligible for participation in OSSAA sanctioned activities:

- A. Prior to September 1, any student reaching 19 years of age will not be eligible to participate in athletic activities at any level. Any student reaching 16 years of age prior to September 1, will not be eligible to participate in athletic activities at the ninth-grade level or below. Any student reaching 15 years of age prior to September 1, will not be eligible to participate in athletic activities at the eighth-grade level or below, and any student reaching 14 years of age prior to September 1, will not be eligible to participate in athletic activities at the seventh grade level or below. In non-athletic activities, any student reaching 21 years of age prior to September 1 will not be eligible for participation.
- B. The student has not attended school eight or more semesters since the time he/she entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (15 days of attendance counts as one semester).
- C. The student passed five courses that count toward graduation the previous semester. (See Exceptions for Block and Trimester)
- D. The student is currently (during the semester) passing all classes (see exceptions for seniors).

### III. IMPACT OF TRANSFER OR CHANGING SCHOOLS AFTER ELIGIBILITY IS ESTABLISHED

An *OSSAA Eligibility Record Form* must be completed for any student who has transferred or changed schools, and for all students participating in activities prior to each school year. The student must have provided an official transcript from the school previously attended and be lawfully enrolled to participate in athletics at a school within a member school district or at a member non-public school.

The student is not permitted to participate if the student was ineligible, or threatened with ineligibility, at the time that the student transferred or changed schools.

If the student has transferred or changed schools after the first day of attendance for that school year, the student is not permitted to participate in athletics for at least fifteen (15) calendar days after the student's first full date of attendance at the school, to allow time for required forms to be completed and for eligibility to be determined. The 15-day period will begin after the student has attended the first full day of classes at the new school.

A student in the seventh or eighth grade remains eligible for junior high athletics after a transfer or change of schools as long as:

1. the student is not repeating all or any part of the seventh or eighth grade;
2. the student has not been influenced to transfer or change schools for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9.
3. A Changing Schools form must be completed between the two schools prior to allowing participation.

After completing the eighth grade, a student may transfer or change schools and establish athletic eligibility for grades nine through twelve when the student first participates in interscholastic athletics at the ninth grade level or above. The student is not eligible if the student has been influenced to transfer or change schools for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9. The student's eligibility for grades nine through twelve may also be affected if the student repeated all or any part

of the seventh or eighth grade, so the receiving school must review the student's records and determine if those records disclose any repeat period.

A student who transfers or changes schools in grades nine through twelve after establishing athletic eligibility by first participation is ineligible to participate in varsity athletics during the student's first full year of attendance unless the student has obtained a waiver to allow for participation or meets other criteria for immediate eligibility as provided further in the OSSAA Rules.

If a new student falls under one of the following categories, you should check further into that student's eligibility:

1. Is living with someone other than who they lived with last year (Even if new person is a parent)
2. Entered your school after the semester had officially begun
3. Another residence is being maintained in a separate school district or designated geographic area.
4. Answers yes to questions(s) on the *OSSAA Eligibility Record Form*.

#### IV. APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTION FROM INELIGIBILITY DUE TO UNAVOIDABLE HARDSHIP OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

As a part of the overall effort to preserve equitable participation opportunities, prevent the recruitment of students based on athletic skill or experience, protect students from exploitation, and discourage overemphasis on athletics to the detriment of other important educational programs, the membership of the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association has established certain rules governing eligibility. OSSAA Rule 8 provides that a student who establishes athletic eligibility for grades nine through twelve at one secondary school and then transfers or changes schools is ineligible for varsity athletics for a full year from the date of the student's first attendance at the new school.

Rule 8 also provides for a one-year period of ineligibility when:

- (a) a student has established eligibility for grades nine through twelve where the student's family is residing, and the student's family moves away from the area, and the student chooses to change to a school outside the public school district or designated geographic area in which the student's family is residing;
- (b) a student moving from out-of-state after having participated in grade nine or above chooses to attend a member school outside the public school district or designated geographic area in which the student's family is residing. Other OSSAA rules also limit the number of years of participation and provide for age limits for the participant.

OSSAA recognizes however, that some students are compelled to transfer schools or to choose a particular school at which they are ineligible under Rule 8 because of hardships beyond the control of the student or the student's parents or guardian. OSSAA also recognizes that some students are prevented from completing grades at the expected age due to injury, illness or other circumstance beyond their control. OSSAA therefore provides for the granting of exceptions that would allow a student who would otherwise be ineligible to participate without delay if the student can be shown to meet certain criteria.

In some instances, imposing a period of ineligibility would not serve the purposes for which the general rule was created. A foreign student enrolling in a member school under a recognized international student exchange program generally will be attending the school only for one year, so allowing participation for that period would be consistent with the educational objectives of OSSAA's member schools and the exchange programs. In addition, there may be instances in which non-varsity participation opportunities are available at the school receiving the new student, and allowing non-varsity participation similarly would not raise a threat of competitive inequities or exploitation. Exceptions allowing participation therefore may also be recognized in these circumstances provided there is no evidence that the student was influenced to transfer schools for athletic purposes.

By submitting an application for exception or waiver, the school and the student on whose behalf the application is submitted, and the parents, current custodial parent, or court appointed guardian with legal custody of the student, acknowledge and agree that the application shall be reviewed and evaluated by the OSSAA's Executive Director and staff, that the Executive Director or staff designee is authorized to conduct any further investigation or to request any supplementation of the application or supporting materials deemed necessary to the evaluation of the application, that the application shall be evaluated using the criteria set forth in this manual, and that the determination of the Executive Director shall be transmitted, in writing, to the principal or administrative head of the school submitting the application.

OSSAA forms for applying for an exception or waiver are located on the OSSAA website under the *Eligibility link*. Before completing this application, the person or persons completing the form must identify the criteria that would support granting a waiver. Documentation demonstrating how or why the student's circumstances fall within those criteria must be gathered and submitted with the application.

Hardship waiver requests that have been denied by OSSAA Staff can be appealed to the intermediate appeals panel, as provided in OSSAA Rule 20, section 3. An appeal denied by the intermediate appeals panel may be appealed to OSSAA's Board of Directors at their next regularly scheduled Board Meeting. A \$100.00 fee to cover administrative costs of an appeal to OSSAA's Board of Directors must be received by school check, cashier's check, or money order no less than 3 business days prior to the Board meeting. If monies are not received 3 business days prior to the meeting, the appeal will not be put on the Board agenda.

## V. INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING HARDSHIP EXCEPTION FORMS

Forms for a Hardship Waiver Application can be found on the *Eligibility link* at OSSAA.com, under the link *FORMS FOR FILING A WAIVER REQUEST*.

- A. Make certain you have current forms and destroy all other hardship forms.
- B. Duplicate the current blank forms as needed.
- C. Complete the appropriate *Hardship Eligibility Clarification Request Form* and the *Eligibility Record Form* in the student's presence, and preferably in the presence of the student's parents, or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student, so that the information provided is correct.
- D. Determine if the student meets any of the hardship criteria before submitting the request.
- E. For a student who is changing or has changed schools after establishing eligibility for grades nine through twelve:
  1. **Wait** until the student is a legal student enrolled in your school before applying.
  2. The *Eligibility Record Form* shall be completed upon enrollment;
  3. Contact the school last attended and request the *Transfer Athletic Eligibility Information Form* to be completed and returned on the student;
  4. The Request for Hardship Eligibility Clarification must be accompanied by the *Eligibility Record* and the *Transfer Athletic Eligibility Information Form*, together with copies of all material relied upon in support of the request.
- F. Allow a minimum of 15 days for a decision on the request after all required documentation has been received by the OSSAA.

## VI. HARDSHIP EXCEPTION OR WAIVER CONSIDERATION CRITERIA

- A. Before submitting a Hardship Eligibility Clarification Request Form, the submitting school shall consider and determine whether the change or choice of schools was the result of any of the following occurrences or factors beyond the control of the student. The Request should indicate which of the following criteria are believed to be applicable. A description of the type of documentation and information that must be submitted in support of a request based on those criteria follows each of the stated criteria.

### 1. An unstable home environment in which the physical and/or emotional health of the student is at serious risk.

#### *REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION*

Documentation must be submitted describing the student's situation, prepared and verified by a health or law enforcement professionally familiar with the student's home environment. Broad and vague claims of potential threats are not sufficient. The request must further state the address of the home in question, identify the principal residents at the address, and state the address of the home or residence facility in which the student currently is or will be residing, and identify the principal residents or supervisor at that location.

### 2. Placement in a different residence by order of court or a supervising government agency.

#### *REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION*

A certified copy of the order of the court or supervising government agency directing the removal of the student from the home in question and placing the student in another home or residence facility must be submitted. If the order does not identify the address of the home from which the student was removed, the address of the home or other facility in which the student has been placed, and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of any attorneys involved in the placement, then that information should be supplied in the application or other supporting documentation. A divorce decree, or a separation or temporary custody order, or an order establishing a guardianship, which grants custody to a parent or other person who has moved to or is living in a different residence, will not be sufficient, unless the decree or order includes an express finding by the court or agency that the student's health or safety would be at risk if the student remained in the prior residence, or that placement in a different residence and transfer of schools is necessary in the student's best interests.

3. **A sincere desire to continue a course of study, program, or activity in which the student was actively involved in the previous school year and which is no longer available at the school at which eligibility had been established.**

*REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION*

Documentation must be submitted describing the course of study, program, or activity that would be or has become unavailable, verifying the extent of the student's prior participation in that course of study, program, or activity, and confirming the unavailability of that course of study, program, or activity. A lack of advanced placement or honors classes in a particular subject, or a previous school's inability or refusal to offer courses in a subject area which are more advanced or more specialized than the courses already offered, will not be a basis for approving a waiver or exception.

4. **An annexation, redistricting, or school closing affecting that student.**

*REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION*

Documentation must be submitted identifying the school previously attended, describing the annexation, redistricting or school closing at issue, and verifying how the student was affected.

5. **Any other circumstance beyond the control of the student and the student's family which creates an unavoidable hardship for that student.**

*REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION*

Documentation verifying the relevant facts and explaining the impact upon the student in question must be submitted. Consideration will be given only if special circumstances beyond the control of the student and the student's family create an unavoidable hardship. Exceptions will be a rarity.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. consideration will be given when incidents of bullying or harassment have occurred which have been communicated to school personnel, and reasonable efforts by school personnel were made to resolve the issues before the student was compelled to change schools.  
**Required documentation:** documentation verifying the bullying had been reported to school administration prior to withdrawing from school; school administration reasonable period of time to resolve the issue.
- B. consideration will be given when a full-time certified teacher or administrator changes schools away from where the student is currently established. The family must be able to demonstrate that the student(s) have a pattern of attending school where the full-time certified educator is employed. The change in schools for the student must occur when the job change occurs.  
**Required documentation:** a statement verifying the student has established a pattern of attending school where the full-time certified teacher or administrator was previously employed.
- C. consideration will be given when a student has established away from the district of residence of the parent, custodial parent or court appointed guardian and subsequently returns to the district of residence. The documentation must demonstrate the student has never established eligibility in the district of residence and indicate the reason for the change of schools. The change of schools will only be considered if the schools are located in two separate public school districts.  
**Required documentation:** a statement signed by mom, dad and student verifying the following:  
The student has established eligibility away from the district of residence; the student has not established in the district of residence since entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade; the reason for establishing in the district of residence at the time the request is made. Verification the receiving and sending schools are located in two separate public school districts.
- D. consideration will be given when a student moves with the parent, custodial parent or court appointed guardian from outside the State of Oklahoma into the State and the student legally enrolls outside the district of residence.

- B. The Request submitted must describe which of the above criteria apply to the student, explain why those criteria are applicable, and identify material or information submitted in support for applying those criteria. If more than one of the above-referenced criteria are applicable, then the Request should list all of the applicable criteria and all supporting documentation required to support those criteria should be submitted.

A hardship request should NOT be submitted if the Transfer Athletic Eligibility Information Form received from the student's former school, or any other reliable information, indicates that:

1. the student was barred from participating or otherwise was ineligible at the time of departure from the prior school, in which case the ineligibility issue at the prior school must be resolved before a request is submitted; if there is a question about whether the student was ineligible at the prior school, then the student's current school may contact the OSSAA;
  2. the student was encouraged to transfer or select a school in violation of OSSAA Rule 9, in which case the current school must investigate further and be able to provide a written report concerning its investigation when and if a hardship request is submitted;
  3. the student transferred due to discontentment with coaches or other personnel at the school at which eligibility was already established;
  4. the student or a parent, or custodial parent or court appointed guardian with legal custody of the student, has knowingly given an incorrect residence address or any other incorrect information that would be relevant to a determination of the request.
- C. If a request is submitted without the records or materials necessary to evaluate whether the identified criteria are met, then the request will be rejected without further review. If a request is submitted with supporting documentation for some, but not all of the criteria that the applicant is attempting to meet, then the application will only be considered on the criteria for which supporting documentation has been submitted.
- D. Hardship waiver requests based solely on a student's parents separating or divorcing will not be considered or approved. When parents separate or divorce after a student's eligibility has been established for grades nine through twelve, the eligibility of the student will be at the school where the student was attending prior to the separation or divorce. A hardship waiver request may be considered if other criteria referenced above are met.

OSSAA recognizes that in some situations after a student has been residing with one parent for an extended period following a separation or divorce and established eligibility for grades nine through twelve while residing with that parent, the student may develop a sincere desire to reside with the other parent which is unrelated to any athletic considerations, and that the other parent may be residing at that time in a different and distant school district which would require the student to change schools in order to reside with the other parent. OSSAA staff may therefore grant a one-time waiver, without further action by OSSAA's Board of Directors, permitting eligibility for a student who, after establishing eligibility based on the residence of one divorced parent, has moved to the other divorced parent's residence in a different and distant school district, provided that:

- (a) the student and each parent have certified in writing that the student is moving for the first time from one parent's residence to the other parent's residence in a different school district, and that the move from one parent to the other is not being made for athletic purposes;
  - (b) the student and each parent further acknowledge and agree in writing that any subsequent move back to the original parent's residence and/or a subsequent transfer back to the student's former school will result in the loss of athletic eligibility, unless and until a basis for granting a hardship waiver request under one or more criteria referenced above has been demonstrated.
  - (c) the student and each parent have certified in writing an understanding that should a subsequent move back to the other parent occur, the student will no longer be eligible for varsity participation at the current school or the new school.
- E. Exceptions due to hardship will not be considered or approved in the following circumstances:
1. Simple change in guardianship.
  2. Discontentment with school in which the student's eligibility has been established.
  3. Changing schools to take a course or participate in an activity not offered at the previous school, unless the transfer is necessary for the student to continue a course of study or activity that was discontinued at the previous school.
  4. Reinstatement of eligibility of a student after an incorrect address or any other incorrect information was provided in connection with a request.
  5. More than one residence is being maintained in circumvention of eligibility rules.

## VII. ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS NOT RESIDING WITH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

- A. OSSAA Rule 8 provides that, to be eligible for athletics, a student must be residing with the student's parents, or custodial parent, or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student. OSSAA recognizes, however, that due to circumstances beyond their control, some students have been residing for extended periods with adult family members or adult friends of the family who are not a parent or court-appointed guardian, and that, in some instances, the adult family member or adult friend has never been formally appointed as guardian by a court. OSSAA has concluded that an exception allowing athletic eligibility should be recognized in certain circumstances even though the student is not currently residing with a parent or a court-appointed guardian. When a member school determines that a student wants to participate in interscholastic athletics at the school, and the student is not currently residing with one or both of the student's parents or with a court-appointed guardian

with legal custody of the student, but is instead residing with another adult family member or with an adult friend of the family, the school may nevertheless permit the student to participate in athletics at the school if:

- (a) the school verifies that the student has been residing with a responsible adult family member or adult friend of the family for one year or more prior to the student's first attendance at the school;
- (b) the school has verified that the student has been lawfully enrolled at the school, and the *Eligibility Record Form* for the student has been reviewed and signed by the responsible adult with whom the student has been residing;
- (c) the school has confirmed that the student is not residing with another adult family member or adult friend of the family for the purpose of establishing athletic eligibility away from the student's parents or the student's custodial parent, and
- (d) the student otherwise is eligible under all other applicable OSSAA eligibility rules and policies.

If the student has been residing with the other adult family member or adult friend of the family for less than one year, then a request for exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance must be submitted and approved before the student may be allowed to participate in varsity athletics. A complete explanation of why the student is not residing with a parent or court-appointed guardian, with appropriate supporting documentation, must be submitted with the request. A student who has been residing with another adult family member or adult friend of the family for less than one year may be permitted to participate in subvarsity or junior high athletics as permitted for that student's grade level, if the *Eligibility Record Form*, the *Transfer Athletic Eligibility Form*, and other appropriate documentation has been completed, and the student otherwise is eligible under all other OSSAA rules and policies.

Once athletic eligibility has been established while the student is residing with another adult family member or an adult friend of the family, that responsible adult is treated as the student's parent or court-appointed guardian for OSSAA eligibility purposes. If the student later moves in with one or both of the student's parents, or with a court-appointed guardian, or with a different family member or family friend, and the student transfers or changes schools, then the student is not eligible immediately for varsity athletics, unless the student applies and receives approval for an exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance pursuant to OSSAA Rule 8, section 10.

- B. OSSAA additionally recognizes that a high school student who has reached the age of eighteen may choose to reside apart from the responsible adult(s) with whom the student previously had been residing when the student's athletic eligibility was established. Generally, a student in that circumstance is still considered to be eligible at the school or within the public school district at which athletic eligibility was established, even if the student chooses to reside in a different public school district or the designated geographic area for a different non-public member school. If the student then moves to a different school, the student would be required to sit out of varsity athletics for one year from the student's date of first attendance following the change of schools.

If the student in this circumstance can establish that the change of schools was due to an unavoidable hardship beyond the student's control, then an exception allowing immediate varsity athletic eligibility may be requested, consistent with the procedures and criteria stated in the OSSAA Hardship Waiver Manual.

An exception due to hardship will only be permitted if the school can demonstrate that:

- (a) the student is lawfully enrolled at the school, the *Eligibility Record Form* for the student has been reviewed and signed by the student, and the *Transfer Athletic Eligibility Form* and other appropriate documentation has been completed;
- (b) the change of schools was due to an unavoidable hardship beyond the student's control;
- (c) the student has reached the age of eighteen, and is financially independent and residing without any financial assistance from the responsible adults(s) with whom the student previously was residing;
- (d) the student is not residing apart from the responsible adults(s) with whom the student previously was residing for the purpose of establishing athletic eligibility away from the student's previous school;
- (e) the student otherwise is eligible in all other applicable OSSAA eligibility rules and policies.

## VIII. EXCEPTIONS FOR OVER-AGED STUDENTS

### A. Criteria that may be considered

The circumstances in which a student may be permitted to participate in athletics beyond the age limitations established under Rule 1 are very limited. The same criteria applied to hardship waiver requests made after a transfer of schools do not apply to requests to participate in athletics once a student's age exceeds the limits under Rule 1.

A waiver or exception to Rule 1 age limits is only granted upon proof that the student was delayed from starting school, or was held back from advancing from one grade level to the next, by circumstances beyond the control of the student and the student's parents (or custodial parent or legally appointed guardian). Even if a student qualifies for a waiver or exception to the age limitation, the student may not be permitted to participate in a particular activity if, in view of the student's size and development, the student's participation presents an obvious danger to other participants.

Any application for a waiver or an exception to the age limitations must be accompanied by appropriate and credible documentation detailing the circumstances that prevented the student from beginning school at the expected age or which prevented or significantly delayed the student from advancing academically. Documentation could include testing results, medical records, doctor's reports, counselor's reports, individualized education plans, and school transcripts. Submission of a written summary describing the circumstances that prevented the student from advancing academically, without any adequate supporting documentation, is not sufficient to grant an exception.

Forms for an Overage Hardship Application can be found on the eligibility link at OSSAA.com, under the link *FORMS FOR FILING A WAIVER REQUEST FOR OVERAGE/ADDITIONAL SEMESTERS*.

**B. Factors That Will Not Permit Exceptions for Over-Age Participation**

1. The student repeated a grade after beginning the ninth grade, unless that particular failure to make normal academic progress is shown to have been the result of the school's failure to provide or to properly place the student in appropriate special education classes, or to a serious injury or illness, or to difficulties transitioning from a foreign language to instruction primarily in English.
2. If the student's size and development is such that he/she could be an obvious danger to other participants.
3. The student is twenty years of age, or if the student is at the ninth-grade level or below, the student is seventeen years of age.

**IX. EXCEPTION FOR ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF PARTICIPATION**

**A. Criteria That May Be Considered to Permit Additional Periods of Participation**

The circumstances in which a student may be permitted another semester or year of participation in athletics beyond the periods permitted under Rule 7 are very limited. In particular, OSSAA member schools have concluded that allowing a "medical redshirt" period for a student who is prevented from participating in athletics due to illness or injury, but is able to complete academic work necessary to advance to the next grade level and progress normally toward graduation, is not appropriate and consistent with the objectives of the Association. In addition, the same criteria applied to hardship waiver requests made after a transfer of schools do not apply to requests for an additional semester or year of participation in athletics.

After beginning the seventh grade, a student generally is limited to participating in athletics during that school year and the five school years that follow consecutively after that school year. A student also is limited generally to participating in athletics in the ninth grade or below during three consecutive school years once that student begins attending the seventh grade. After beginning the ninth grade, a student generally is limited to participating in athletics during that school year and the three school years that follow consecutively after that school year. These limitations apply even if the student does not actually participate in athletics during any particular school year or semester.

If a student repeats all or a portion of the seventh or eighth grade and, in compliance with Rule 7, does not participate in athletics during that repeat period, then that repeat period is not counted against the six consecutive school years in which athletic participation is allowed. If a student participates in athletics while repeating all or any portion of the seventh or eighth grades, then that period of participation is counted against the total of three consecutive school years in which a student is permitted to participate in athletics at the ninth grade or below, and against the overall total of six consecutive school years in which athletic participation is allowed.

If a student repeats all or a portion of the ninth grade or a higher grade level, the student may only participate in athletic competition open to students at the ninth grade level and above during that repeat period, and may not participate in athletic activities limited to students in the ninth grade or below. This repeat period is counted against the total of four consecutive years in which a student is permitted to participate in athletic competition open to students in the ninth grade level and above, and against the overall total of six consecutive school years in which athletic participation is allowed. This repeat period is counted toward these totals regardless of whether or not the student participates in athletics during the repeat period.

After the student has begun the ninth grade, an exception allowing a student the opportunity to participate in athletics in an additional semester or school year may only be granted upon sufficient proof that circumstances arose beyond the control of the student and the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student), such as a serious and debilitating injury or illness, which prevented the student from completing academic work necessary to advance to the next grade level and make normal progress toward graduation. An injury or illness that merely prevented athletic participation, but did not prevent the student from completing academic work, would not be sufficient to allow an exception.

Applications for this exception must be accompanied by appropriate and credible documentation detailing the circumstances that prevented the student from advancing academically, such as medical records, doctor's reports, counselor's reports, and documentation detailing the student's academic progress and athletic participation to date, including school transcript and schedules. Submission of a written summary describing the circumstances that prevented the student from advancing academically, without any adequate supporting documentation, is not sufficient to grant an exception.

**B. Factors That Will Not Permit Additional Period of Participation**

1. If a student repeated all or a portion of a grade after making average or above average grades.
2. If a student participated in athletic competition during a repeat period.
3. If a student already had the opportunity to participate in an interscholastic sport at the ninth-grade level or above during four different school years.

Forms for an additional year of participation can be found on the eligibility link at OSSAA.com, under the link *FORMS FOR FILING A WAIVER REQUEST FOR OVERAGE/ADDITIONAL SEMESTERS*.

**X. ELIGIBILITY FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**A. Foreign Exchange Students**

1. A foreign exchange student is an international student who attends high school in the United States. To be eligible for interscholastic athletics such students must be under the auspices of and be placed with a United States host family by an international student exchange program that has been accepted for listing by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) and is recognized by the U.S. Department of State. The foreign exchange program must assign students to host families by a method that ensures that no student, or his/her parents, school or other interested party may influence the assignment for athletic or other purposes. The foreign exchange student may not be selected or placed on any basis related to his/her athletic interests or abilities.
2. A foreign exchange student is considered to be placed with a host family when written notice of placement is provided by the exchange organization to the student and his/her parents, and to the host family.
  - a. Neither the school the student attends nor any person associated with the school shall have input into the selection of the student.
  - b. No member of the school's coaching staff, paid or voluntary, shall serve as the host family.
3. The foreign exchange student must possess a current J-1 visa, issued by the U.S. State Department.
4. To apply for eligibility for a Foreign Exchange Student, print out the forms from the Eligibility link at OSSAA.com, *Foreign/International Student Registration*. The CSIET Advisory List as well as the instructions sheet for filing the request can also be found on the Eligibility page of OSSAA.com. The foreign exchange student must comply with all eligibility requirements set forth by Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association.
  - a. The Registration Form must be completed and returned to the OSSAA office.
  - b. The Age Rule must be satisfied.
  - c. The student could not have been in high school more than three previous years.
  - d. The student has not graduated.
  - e. An approved student will not be eligible for more than 365 days.
  - f. The student must be eligible academically and meet all other regulations concerning eligibility of the OSSAA.

**B. Other International Students**

An international student who is not under the auspices of and placed by a CSIET listed exchange program must meet the following requirements in order to be considered for interscholastic athletics eligibility:

1. The student must possess a current F-1 visa, issued by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.
2. The student must provide to the principal of the school he/she attends an official untranslated transcript and a transcript that is translated into English, by an acceptable agent or agency, which indicated work taken in all grades in which the student was enrolled.



3. The international student must pay tuition to the high school he/she attends as prescribed in Section 625 of U.S. Public Law 104-208.
4. No member of the school's coaching staff, paid or voluntary, shall serve as the resident family for the student. The student must request and receive a written exception allowing participation from the OSSAA office. To receive a written exception, the school and the student must demonstrate that:
  - a. the student has come to the United States primarily for the purpose of completing secondary school-level education;
  - b. the student was not assisted with travel expenses, and is not receiving assistance with school-related and living expenses, from any organization or non-family member by reason of the student's athletic skills, experience or interests;
  - c. the student's placement with a resident or host family were not influenced or based on athletic considerations;
  - d. the student otherwise is eligible under all other OSSAA rules relating to academics, age, periods of participation, attendance, conduct, and amateur status.

Generally, the student also is expected to attend school in the public school district, or at a non-public school in the designated geographic area, in which the resident or host family are residing, or at the same school attended by the secondary school-age children of the resident or host family. If the student is attending a different school, then the school and the student need to demonstrate that attendance at the school was necessary due to the student's particular academic needs, and not because of the student's athletic skills, experience or interests.

#### **XI. EXCEPTIONS PERMITTING NON-VARSITY PARTICIPATION**

- A. OSSAA recognizes that many member schools participate in competition limited to freshmen or junior varsity participants and those permitting transfer students in grades 9-12 to participate in such non-varsity competition in some instances would not cause competitive imbalances or subject those students to risk of exploitation for athletic purposes.

If the student's former and current schools both approve in writing by completing the *Changing Schools Form* then the student after attending the new school for 15 full days, may be permitted to participate in non-varsity competition. The 15-day period will begin after the student has attended the first full day of classes at the new school.

- B. After one year from the student's date of first attendance, the student would then be eligible for varsity competition under OSSAA Rule 8, provided the student was eligible under all other Rules.
- C. Approval on non-varsity participation is not effective until the receiving school has received the signed documentation and placed with the student's permanent records. If any issue has been raised about the student having been influenced to transfer for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9, the written approval should not be given. The student's former school or new school must investigate the issue, and the student should not be permitted to participate in non-varsity competition. Any evidence gathered in the investigation by the schools must be submitted to OSSAA, and if immediate eligibility for non-varsity competition is still sought, a written request for exception must be submitted on behalf of the student. A student transferring after the first day of classes will not be eligible until the above requirements have been met, the Changing Schools/Athletic Participation Form has been completed and student has satisfied the mandatory 15 calendar day sit out period.



**ORGANIZATIONS ACCEPTED FOR LISTING IN THE 2023-2024 CSIET ADVISORY LIST**

Academic Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (AFICE)	Full
AFS-USA, Inc.	Full
AIFS Foundation-Academic Year in America	Full
American Councils for International Education (ACTR/ACCELS)	Full
American Cultural Exchange Service (ACES)	Full
AnB Education	Full
ARISE USA	Provisional
ASPECT Foundation	Full
ASSE International Student Exchange Program	Full
ASSIST, Inc.	Full
Association for Teen-age Diplomats	Full
AYUSA International	Full
Borderless Friends Forever Foundation	Full
Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Program	Full
Children Around the World	Provisional
Children of All Nations	Full
Council for Educational Travel, USA	Full
Council on International Educational Exchange	Full
Cultural Academic Student Exchange Inc.	Full
Cultural Homestay International	Full
Eastern States Rotary Exchange (ESSEX)	Full
Education Travel & Culture	Full
Educational Resource Development Trust (ERDT/Share!)	Full
EF High School Exchange Year	Full
Empire State Rotary Youth Exchange	Full
Face the World Foundation	Full
Foreign Links Around the Globe (F.L.A.G.)	Full
Forte International Exchange Association	Full
Foundation for Academic Cultural Exchange	Full
Foundation for Worldwide International Student Exchange	Full
German American Partnership Program, Inc	Full
Global Insights	Full
Greenhart Exchange	Full
HSUSA (dba global Cultural Exchanges)	Full
International Cultural Exchange Services	Full
International Education Student Exchange Program (INTER-ED)	Provisional
International Experience-USA	Full
International Fellowship	Full
International Student Exchange	Full
Iowa Resource for International Service	Full
Nacel Open Door	Full
North Star Youth Exchange	Full
NorthWest Student Exchange	Full
NW Services PEACE Program	Full
Organization for Cultural Exchange Among Nations (O.C.E.A.N.)	Full
Ohio-Erie Youth Exchange Exchange	Full
Pan Atlantic Foundation	Full
PAX - Program of Academic Exchange	Full
Reflections International	Full

<b>Rotary programs:</b>	
Rotary International	Full
Rotary Youth Exchange Florida, Inc.	Full
Rotary Youth Exchange Southeast, Inc.	Full
South Central Rotary Youth Exchange Program	Full
Western States Student Exchange, Inc.	Full
YES/SCANEX	Full
States' 4-H International Exchange Program	Full
STS Foundation	Full
Student American International	Full
Terra Lingua USA	Full
UCEUS	Provisional
United Studies, Inc. Student Exchange	Provisional
World Link	Full
Youth for Understanding USA (YFU USA)	Full

In the 2022-2023 CSIET Advisory List, organizations have been granted a Full, Provisional, or Conditional Listing.

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