

HOSA Competitive Events

General Rules and Regulations

All competitors must be familiar with and adhere to these General Rules and Regulations of the HOSA Competitive Events Program. Successful competitors will read and study these rules in addition to their event guidelines. All rules listed here are extensions of the event guidelines. Additionally, if any rules or processes change for ILC, updates are posted online at <https://hosa.org/ce-ilc-updates/>. Information posted on this site is also an extension of the event guidelines and considered part of the rules and regulations of the Competitive Event Program administered at ILC annually.

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Eligibility for International Participation

1. HOSA's affiliated [chartered associations](#) offer the HOSA Competitive Events Program at the Regional, Area, State and/or Country levels, according to the approved HOSA Competitive Events Guidelines (as released annually in the fall). It is recommended that chartered associations plan and conduct the Annual Conference in sufficient time to meet the International Leadership Conference (ILC) registration deadline of May 15th. (Note: The HOSA ILC is held in June each year.)
2. Chartered associations may submit a maximum of three (3) competitors/teams per event per division, except Recognition events as noted in Rule #8 of these General Rules and Regulations and except National Geographic Learning Academic Testing Center (NGL ATC) events as noted in Rule #6. If ties or event challenges result at the association level, chartered associations must implement a process to determine which three (3) competitors/teams per division may register for the International Leadership Conference.
3. To be eligible for competition at the ILC, a delegate must be a member of HOSA, registered on a chapter roster, no later than January 1 if the member is enrolled in the Fall semester; Spring enrollees must be affiliated by March 1 or within thirty (30) days of the beginning of a program initiated during the Spring semester.
 - a. Chartered associations determine and publish specific competition eligibility deadlines.
 - b. All participants must adhere to the eligibility requirements as specified in the individual Competitive Event Guidelines.
 - c. Members are not eligible for competition at the ILC if they are not affiliated with HOSA-Future Health Professionals before their respective chartered association's leadership conference.
4. Competitive event participants must be registered for HOSA's International Leadership Conference by May 15th. Registered participants may be dropped, or other eligible students may be substituted, until the state advisor has completed registering the chartered association with competitive events at the ILC. All participants are officially entered when the State HOSA advisor (or their designee) verifies the chartered association's registration.

5. Individual and team participants must have competed in the same competitive event at the state (country) level for which they are entered at the international level. The competition must have taken place in the school year immediately preceding the HOSA International Leadership Conference. (Substitutes on a team are not required to have competed in the event at the state/country level. See GRR rule #24)
6. **Event Maximums:**
 - a. HOSA members may enter only ONE regular competitive event at the ILC.
 - b. Competitors may participate in as many National Geographic Learning Academic Testing Center (NGL ATC) events at ILC as they wish, provided the tests are paid for and the competitor can logistically sit for all events for which they are registered.
 - c. All ILC attendees may register and take the Health Care Issues Exam.
 - d. In addition, competitors may participate in as many Recognition Category Events as they wish.
 - e. Students registered as a Voting Delegate who also wish to take HCIE may do so.
7. **Event status.** Skill events must have a minimum of three (3) states and nine (9) total competitors (Secondary and Postsecondary/collegiate) in order to have the skills procedures implemented at the ILC the following year. Events not meeting these criteria may have a written test only. This written test will include clinical written application or scenarios. For the Middle School division, all events must have a minimum of three (3) states and three (3) total competitors in order to have the event implemented at the international level the following year. The event status will be evaluated annually.
8. In Recognition events, each chartered association may register the following number of competitors:
 - a. Healthcare Issue Exam: Unlimited
 - b. HOSA Service Project: One per chapter.
 - c. Barbara James Service Award: Unlimited.
 - d. HOSA Happenings: One per chapter.
 - e. Outstanding HOSA Leader: One per chartered association.
 - f. Outstanding HOSA Achievement: One per chartered association.
 - g. America's Blood Centers and HOSA Blood Drive: One per chapter
 - h. Emotional Well-Being Challenge: Unlimited
 - i. American Red Cross Chapter Recognition: Unlimited
 - j. American Red Cross Diversify the Blood Supply Video Challenge- Unlimited
 - k. HOSA History Exam: Unlimited
9. All HOSA competitors must be active members of HOSA in good standing as established by HOSA-Future Health Professionals. In good standing means that they must have a minimum of five (5) members in their chapter, an advisor, and their affiliation fees paid in full.
10. HOSA members who graduate prior to the International Leadership Conference (ILC) (e.g., in May before the June ILC, or through early graduation in January before the June ILC) may still participate in competitive events at the ILC under the following conditions:
 - a. The member remains an active member of HOSA in good standing (as defined in the Bylaws).
 - b. The member has qualified for the ILC competition in accordance with their chartered association's policy.
 - c. The member has obtained permission to attend from their parent or guardian, chapter advisor, school administration, and State Advisor.

Divisions of Competition

11. **Definition of divisions** - The official definition for middle school, secondary and postsecondary/ collegiate members of HOSA, for the purposes of Competitive Events registration and participation, is:
- a. **Middle School (MS)** - A middle school student is one who: a) is enrolled in a state-approved health science program or is planning to pursue a career in the health professions; and b) has not been promoted to a secondary institution (grades 9-12) prior to the state's/country's annual conference. They must be in grades 6-8.
 - b. **Secondary (SS)** - The Secondary Division shall be composed of secondary students at the junior high (9th grade) or high school level (9th – 12th).
 - c. **Postsecondary/Collegiate (PS/C)** - The Postsecondary/Collegiate Division shall be composed of undergraduate students who (a) are enrolled in a state-approved postsecondary program at the community college level or college level program; (b) have received a high-school diploma (or its equivalent) or (c) have been out of the continuous, sequential educational system prior to the current enrollment for two or more years prior to the current year's HOSA International Leadership Conference and/or enrolled in a health career program in pursuit of a baccalaureate degree.
 - d. Members must register and compete in the division for which they fall (i.e., a middle school member cannot "compete up" as a secondary member, etc.).

Guideline Development and Event Resources

12. **Guideline Updates** - After the initial release, only editorial changes are made to guidelines, unless there is an error that would affect the outcome of the event or how competitors prepare. In this case, updated guidelines are posted online with a note to the membership explaining any changes.
13. **Latest Edition** - When a resource indicates "latest edition," it refers to the most current edition available at the time the guidelines were initially written, as posted on September 1. Any editions released after that date will be included in the resource list for the following year.
14. **Partnered Sponsored Events** - HOSA reviews the resources annually with the sponsoring partner. When revisions or supplements are required to meet HOSA's needs, the Competitive Events Director or designated liaison works with the sponsoring partner to ensure changes are made for a successful outcome.
15. **Events Without Partners** - HOSA reviews event guideline resources annually, with each submission receiving consideration. The number of resources for each event is unique and tailored to meet each event's needs.

Educational Accommodations or Special Medical Needs

16. HOSA members with disabilities, special needs, and non-English speaking competitors will be reasonably accommodated in the HOSA Competitive Events Program through event accommodations.
17. All details of event accommodations, including how to request accommodation, can be found in [Appendix H](#).
18. **English Language** - All HOSA events at the International Level are to be conducted in English. This includes all tests, written or recorded material that is submitted as part of the event for judging, as well as speaking and presentation events. Failure to submit materials in English for judging may result in the items not being scored. Translators may be requested, following the outlined process in [Appendix H](#), through the State Advisor. Translators may only be used to translate a test, or to translate in an event in which the competitor's speaking is not rated. When members are competing in English, and English is their second language, judges are encouraged to consider content, organization, and intent over pronunciation, accent, or minor grammar inconsistencies unless these are core criteria being evaluated.

Ethics

19. Appointment times are given to competitors in many HOSA events to avoid detaining competitors in holding

rooms for long periods of time. Professional ethics demand that competitors DO NOT discuss or reveal the secret topic, or scenario for ANY event.

20. All competitive event materials (such as presentations, projects, portfolios, etc.) must be the original work of the competitors.
21. **Ethics and Integrity** – As future health professionals, HOSA members are held to a higher standard regarding their ethical behavior as competitors. HOSA members should follow the HOSA rules and act with honor at all times. Plagiarism, copyright violation, and falsification of information are prohibited. All sources must be cited, **including AI**. Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Violation of the ethics rules will be severely penalized and could include forfeiture of awards, recognition, or other HOSA privileges as deemed appropriate.
22. **Code of Conduct** - Any competitor who violates the HOSA Code of Conduct during HOSA's International Leadership Conference may forfeit any award won during the conference.
23. **Online Testing Proctors** must act in a manner to ensure valid and reliable results and to ensure test security and integrity. All confidential Materials are kept strictly confidential and are not disclosed to any unauthorized individuals, including HOSA student members and local advisors. Online tests are to be administered in a positive and quiet testing environment that is the same for all testers. Proctors will ensure that test-takers adhere to the online testing rules, which include: no talking, no cell phone/smart watch use, no textbook use, no internet use outside of the testing browser, no notes, and no electronic devices.

Team Events

24. **Substitutions** - A team event must include at least 25% of the members who were on the winning team at the state/country level. Other "qualified" student members may be substituted or added in the remaining team positions so that the number of team members is consistent with the rules for that event. (Qualified is defined as any active HOSA member, and may include members from other chapters). It is acceptable for the team to be composed of members from different chapters, states and/or associations. Substitutes on a team are not required to have competed in the event at the state/country level.
25. **Minimum Team Members** - Teams may not compete with less than the minimum number of team members.
26. **Participation in Both Rounds** - If a team member misses round one of the competition, and the team advances to round two, the missing team member cannot compete in round two. Only team members who participated in round one are allowed to participate in round two.
27. In testing rounds, all registered team members must test at the same time according to the conference schedule. Teams will not be allowed to test until all registered members have arrived at the testing area (the only exception is a cancellation when the remaining team still has the minimum number required to compete).

Event Content

28. **Independent Work** - Except for team events, competitors must work independently, without assistance from judges, teachers, fellow students, or observers. Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will be considered a violation of the GRR Ethics rules.
29. **Content Selection** - Competitors should use good judgment and discretion when planning event content. Procedures, demonstrations, displays, or speeches with content that could be interpreted as insensitive or of a highly personal nature should be avoided and may not be judged.

30. **Changing Event Content** – When advancing from one level of competition to the next (such as from state/country to international competitive events), except where expressly prohibited, competitors are allowed to change/improve their speech, notebook, portfolio, or any other event products as a part of the competitive event. All changes must be made before published deadlines.
31. **Notebook Page Clarification** - When a section of a notebook or portfolio indicates a specific range of pages, and a competitor uses fewer than the maximum number of pages, they CANNOT add pages in another section.
32. **Material Submission** - Unless otherwise noted in the event guidelines, all copies and materials submitted at the International Leadership Conference as part of the HOSA Competitive Events program become the property of HOSA-Future Health Professionals. Submission of materials implies consent for HOSA and /or affiliated partners, with HOSA's permission, to publish materials in newsletters, websites, blog posts, social media, etc., as deemed appropriate to help market and promote HOSA and/or its partners. HOSA does not sell competitor information or materials to 3rd party vendors.
33. **Content from Year to Year** - Content for all competitive events must be unique and new each membership/school year. Content used in a previous membership year's competition may not be used again. The intent of the competition is to use new material every year. If a violation of this rule is discovered, the competitor will receive 35 penalty points. Points will be deducted in Tabulations.

Judging

34. **Rating Sheets and Test Scores** - Participant rating sheets and test scores are the property of HOSA-Future Health Professionals and will NOT be returned or released. For more information, please see the Competitive Events [FAQ](#).
35. **Judge Interaction** – The distribution of event samples, materials, gifts, or thank you notes to judges, other than those materials specified in the event guidelines for judges to review, is NOT permitted.
36. **Materials for Judges** - During competition, only those items specified in the event guidelines may be shown to judges or used during competition (i.e., portfolio, photographs, etc.) Showing the judges extra materials not outlined in the event guidelines may result in point deductions. Props are not allowed in any event except Public Health.
37. **Handshakes with Judges** – No handshakes are allowed with judges except in Job Seeking Skills, Interviewing Skills, and Health Career Preparation. In these events, handshakes are allowed both at the beginning and end of the event. Due to the nature of HOSA competition, there is no time to allow for handshakes between competitors and judges.
38. **Introductions** - For events with judges, competitors (teams) will be introduced to the judges by the Section Leader. At the ILC, for individual events, competitors are usually introduced by name and ID number. For team events, teams are usually introduced by school and ID number. Time will begin as soon as the Section Leader introduces the competitor/team.

Point Deductions

39. **Late Arrivals** - All competitors must be at their competitive event at the designated time and place.
 - a. For non-testing events, ten (10) penalty points may be assessed if the competitor is more than 5 minutes late to their appointed time.
 - b. For all written tests, a competitor who is more than 5 minutes late to the event will be allowed to take the test, but will receive ten (10) penalty points, deducted in Tabulations.
 - c. For HOSA Bowl, Foundations of HOSA Bowl, and Biomedical Debate, which require a paired match-up,

- if a team is more than 5 minutes late to their round two appointed time, the team forfeits their right to compete.
- d. For Medical Spelling, which is a live spelldown, if the competitor is more than 5 minutes late to round two, the spelldown will begin without them, and they may not be allowed to compete.
 - e. It is the competitor's responsibility to arrive and compete as scheduled in the ILC agenda, as outlined in the ILC Program Book/Program App. Make-up tests or other accommodations will NOT be given for late arrivals*; missed bus, missed route, missed time, missed location, read the agenda wrong, etc. *Act of God exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the competitor, State Advisor, and HOSA Management. Additionally, early/late tests or early/late competition appointment times are typically not granted - competitors must compete at the time they are assigned as listed in the ILC Program. Exceptions may be granted for school graduation or final exams.
40. **End of Time** - If the competitor is stopped at the event time limit for any event, there is no additional penalty. However, anything presented after the time is called will not be scored.
41. **General Penalty Points** - If judges feel there is a rule infraction that is not addressed in the written guidelines or processes, they may assess penalty points after consultation with HOSA CE Management.

Sections

42. **Number of Sections** - The Competitive Events Management Team will determine whether (and how many) sections will be scheduled for each Competitive Event at the HOSA ILC according to the number of registered participants.
43. **Fairness Between Sections** - A mathematical formula – called standard deviation - will be used for multiple sections in selected events. The computer adjusts the judge's scores to account for judging differences, such that all sections are considered to be mathematically equal. Such a process provides a statistically fair method for evaluating students in multiple sections with multiple sets of judges. The formula can be found in [Appendix A](#).
44. **Sections** - Separate sections of each event shall be conducted for middle school, secondary and postsecondary/ collegiate, when possible. Competitors/teams may have the same section number or may demonstrate their skills for the same judges, but the divisions will not compete against each other. Individual and team competitor numbers will be randomly assigned by the computer.

Skill Events

45. **Skill Selection** - The Competitive Events Management Team will determine which skills are to be performed for skill events, based upon criteria which include space arrangements and condition of available sites, availability of equipment and similar factors pertaining to operation of these events in a particular year.
46. **Skill Event Scenarios** – Events that require the performance of a health-related skill use a written scenario to give information to the competitor about the setting and skill to be performed. The scenario is a secret topic. Competitors MAY NOT discuss or reveal the secret topic until after the event has concluded or will face penalties per the GRRs. The scenario will be the same for each competitor (team) and will include a challenging component that will require the competitors to apply critical thinking skills. The timing of the skill performance begins when the competitor (team) is given the scenario. Competitors must read quickly and begin the skill performance promptly. Competitors may keep the written copy of the scenario as a reference as needed during the performance of the judged skill. For events that use a scenario and are specifically for competitors with special needs (Life Support Skills and Personal Care), the scenario will be read out loud to all competitors. Competitors will be stopped at the end of the time allowed in the scenario. Sample skill event scenarios can be found [HERE](#).

47. **Points and Time with Combined Skills** - Skills may be combined in the scenarios to provide a more real world experience for the competitors. An example of a combined scenario for Clinical Nursing would be the competitor providing an injection to a patient in isolation. The scenario would include donning & doffing PPE in addition to the injection skill. When multiple skills are used and steps in skills are duplicated on the rating sheet but not in practice, points will be awarded one time only (examples would include introducing self to patient, identifying patient, providing privacy, etc) In such cases, the amount of time allowed for the total skill may be adjusted by the Competitive Events Management Team. Competitors will be notified of total time allowed via the written scenario. For example, in CPR/First Aid - If a patient has a burn and fracture, the competitor would only call 911 one time and would only receive points for that step one time. An example of a combined skill scenario can be found [HERE](#).
48. **Judge Responses in Skill Events** - Judges will provide information to competitors as directed by the rating sheets. Competitors may ask questions of the judges while performing skills if the questions relate to the patient's condition. Judges will respond based on information provided in the skill scenario or judge script.
49. **Verbalization of Skills** – It is the competitor's responsibility to communicate fully and effectively with judges. For skill events, this may include "thinking out loud" so that judges are clear on why the competitors are doing what they are doing. In some event guidelines competitors may be asked to verbalize steps, but no credit will be given for verbalization when the competitor does not bring the required equipment per the event guidelines. When equipment is present, competitors must perform the applicable part of the skill and will not receive points for verbalization alone.
50. **Off-site Events** - Due to the distance between the hotels and skill event sites in some skill events, competitors should be prepared for an extended stay. It is strongly suggested that competitors bring recreational materials. Food and/or snacks may be available for purchase at the sites. The competitor should be prepared and have their own snacks & water available.
51. **Highest Level of Training** – Competitors should compete in skill events at the highest level of training. An example would be students enrolled in an Emergency Medical Technician course should compete in the Emergency Medical Technician event and not in the CPR/First Aid or CERT Skills event.
52. **Mercury & Latex Exclusion** - HOSA does not use thermometers, sphygmomanometers, or any other equipment that contains mercury. HOSA does not use latex gloves, and competitors with latex allergies are requested to notify event personnel.
53. **Equipment Preview Time** – HOSA Management and event personnel have the option of providing one additional minute to the skill event interval before the scenario for competitors to preview the equipment that is provided for the event. Competitors will be informed before their skill time begins if they have been granted this additional time.
54. For all skills, body fluids will be a simulated product. In applicable Vet events, live animals are NOT used.

Tests

55. **Higher-Order Thinking Skills** - Written tests will measure knowledge and understanding at the recall, application, or analysis levels. Higher order thinking skills will be incorporated as appropriate. Notes are not allowed on HOSA tests.
56. **Use of Calculators** - Competitors may NOT use calculators when taking any written test, unless permitted in the individual event guidelines.
57. **Test Security** – Tests and word lists for HOSA-Future Health Professionals competitive events are

developed from the HOSA secure test bank for that event. At all levels, HOSA tests are the property of HOSA-Future Health Professionals and should never be taken, copied, or shared with HOSA members or chapter advisors. HOSA tests are provided exclusively for use by chartered associations in good standing for their competitive events and at the ILC.

- 58. **Test Plan and Resource Rotation Process** – The test plan and list of resources in the guidelines are designed to help the competitor prepare for the test. Approved chartered associations have the option of using the previous year's ILC tests for their state competition use, and the previous year's state tests for Regional/Area events. For that reason, tests by chartered associations for their competition at all levels may reflect the test plan and/or resources from the previous year's guidelines.
- 59. **Pencils** – For all written tests, it is the responsibility of the competitor to bring traditional #2 pencils to the event. Mechanical pencils are discouraged for use on Scantrons.
- 60. **Test Time Remaining Announcements:** There will be NO verbal announcements for time remaining during ILC testing. All ILC testing will be completed in the Testing Center, and competitors are responsible for monitoring their own time using large clocks placed in the room.

Equipment

- 61. **Failure to Bring Equipment in Skill Events** - Competitors who fail to bring the required material/equipment as specified in the Competitive Event guidelines for any skill used in any event will be allowed to compete but will not earn points for all or part of the skill(s) that require the missing material/equipment.
- 62. **Equipment Failure** - It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure that the equipment they bring to the event and use as a part of the event is in good working order. Equipment failure (when the competitor provides the equipment) may result in an inability to judge all or part of an event that involves the use of equipment. This includes battery-operated laptops/devices.
- 63. **Podium** - When a podium is provided during an event, the use of the podium by the competitor(s) is optional.
- 64. **Personal Electronic Devices** - Personal electronic devices are defined as portable electronic devices that are capable of wireless communication or electronic data retrieval. Examples include: mobile phones, tablets, laptops, e-readers, and MP3 players.

Other

- 65. **Photo ID:** At ILC, all competitors must have photo identification, as outlined in [Appendix G](#), for each round of competition. If a competitor comes to the competition and does not have the proper photo ID with them, then the competitor will be allowed to compete but will receive 35 penalty points. Points will be deducted in Tabulations. For round 2 Biomedical Debate, HOSA Bowl, Foundations of HOSA Bowl, and Medical Spelling, which require a paired matchup or live spelldown, if a competitor does not provide a valid photo ID, they forfeit their right to compete.
- 66. **Inquiry Process** - A process is established to provide an opportunity for a competitive event participant to submit constructive inquiries and recommendations to the Competitive Events Management Team at HOSA's International Leadership Conference via completion of a "Competitive Event Inquiry Form." This completed form must be signed by the HOSA competitor **and the HOSA State Advisor** and turned in to Competitive Events Headquarters within two (2) hours after the competitive event concludes ([see Appendix B](#)).
- 67. **Personal Articles** - Competitors will be asked to place personal articles (purses, bags) under their chair during a test or an event. They may not obtain anything from their personal article until the test/event is

complete. Event personnel will NOT collect or hold competitors' personal articles during an event.

68. **NO Study Materials** are allowed in testing rooms but are allowed in holding rooms and on event buses to skill sites, unless otherwise specified in guidelines.
69. **Observers** - There will be no observers in any of the events at the ILC, with the possible exception of Demonstration and Pilot events. Additionally, the HOSA conference photographer is allowed in event rooms, as applicable.
70. **Chartered Association Autonomy** - Chartered Associations are encouraged to follow the competitive event processes and event guidelines used by HOSA. However, they have the discretion to implement measures that meet the needs of their chartered association; therefore, HOSA members should consult the State Advisor for all processes and event modifications being used at the Area/Region/State level.
GUIDELINES ARE WRITTEN FOR INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (ILC). IT IS THE COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DETERMINE DIFFERENCES THAT MAY OCCUR IN THEIR CHARTERED ASSOCIATIONS.
71. **Extenuating Circumstances** – It is the intention of HOSA to enforce all rules and event guidelines fairly and consistently. On rare occasions when circumstances are beyond the control of the competitor, such as a canceled flight, a rule can be appealed to the Competitive Events Management Team.