

HSTA

Student and Parent Handbook



Revised 2024

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Acronyms and Meanings

ACT- American College Test- an entrance exam to test college readiness

CRA-Community Research Associate- position of person that helps link HSTA clubs to scientists, labs, and information

FAFSA- Free Application for Federal Student Aid- this form must be filed every year you plan to go to college to qualify for any financial aid (including state aid and HSTA)

FSC- Field site coordinator- the HSTA contact person for parents, students, teachers, and board members

GPA- Grade Point Average- indicates whether you are passing classes and how well you are doing in school

HSTA- Health Sciences and Technology Academy

JGB-Joint Governing Board- statewide board that sets policies and procedures for HSTA and makes sure they are being followed

LGB- Local Governing Board- regional board that makes decisions, sets local policies, and oversees HSTA at the local level

SAT- Scholastic Achievement Test- an entrance exam to test college readiness

Health Sciences & Technology Academy

Most Commonly Asked Questions

1. WHAT IS HSTA?

HSTA, the Health Sciences & Technology Academy, is a 9th – 12th grade health, science, technology, and math program which encourages aspirations, opens doors, and empowers minority and underrepresented students and rural communities. The program is a partnership among the state's Land Grant Universities and 26 counties across the state that seeks to increase the number of underrepresented students in WV who pursue degrees in Health Sciences and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) majors, thereby increasing the number of health practitioners and advocates in the medically underserved communities of West Virginia. This partnership provides the infrastructure and support for community-based science projects mentored by teachers, health professionals, students and volunteer community leaders during the school year.

2. WHY DOES HSTA EXIST?

West Virginia, like many other states, has a severe shortage of health professionals such as doctors, nurses, forensic pathologists, x-ray technicians, and physical therapists, as well as scientists and science educators. HSTA offers educational activities designed to improve academic skills and increase students' chances of success in college and further into science and health related fields. HSTA's goals include the following:

- Increase the number of underrepresented students in WV who pursue Health Sciences and STEM majors
- Increase the number of HSTA scholars to successfully complete undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees
- Increase the number of health practitioners and advocates in medically underserved communities in WV
- Impact health care disparities and promote healthy lifestyles in WV
- Increase community engagement and involvement in health promotion in WV

3. WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES DO THE STUDENTS DO?

- Students attend weekly, after-school meetings, which usually last 1 1/2 - 2 hours per week during their four years of high school.
- Students complete and present a yearly science, research project at the HSTA Science Symposium in the spring.
- Students participate in a week long campus based program at one of several colleges or universities across the state in which they work on projects emphasizing science in ways to develop their knowledge and skills to observe, hypothesize, and develop methods to answer questions which generate knowledge. The hands-on project experiences promote the concept of biology as an experimental science. The students learn to collect, analyze and interpret data, as well as communicate their results. Self-esteem building, motivation enhancement, leadership development skills, and study skills are incorporated into the experience.
- Students may have the opportunity to earn free college credit from a state college or university after their junior year.
- Students take science, technology and health-related field trips.
- Students must complete 75 hours of community service work by late winter of their senior year in high school. The final acceptable date will be determined by the HSTA Local Governing Board.

4. HOW MUCH DOES THIS COST?

All activities including summer camps on college campuses are free to all HSTA students.

5. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT WHO JOINS HSTA?

- Minimum of 70% of the HSTA meetings and activities.
- Keep good grades (Minimum of 2.5 GPA your 9th grade year and Minimum of 3.0 for the rest of the high school years).
- Stay out of trouble in school (HSTA students are required to be above average in behavior as well as grades).
- Prepare and present a yearly science project.
- Attend Summer Institute at least two years.
- Volunteer 75 hours in the community (a local hospital, church, school, etc.).

6. WHAT IF A STUDENT DECIDES THEY DON'T WANT TO STAY IN HSTA?

If a student decides they no longer want to participate in the program, they may resign, and forfeit any chance of gaining a HSTA Tuition Waiver to WV sponsored colleges and universities.

Participation in HSTA

Student Criteria

- Students must be a United States citizen and a West Virginia state resident and attend an approved HSTA school as stated in the policy and procedures manual.

Students will be accepted into the HSTA program according to the eligibility requirements prioritized as:

- Underrepresented minority as determined by federal guidelines
- Financially Disadvantaged (Free or reduced lunch guidelines used)
- First Generation College Student where neither parents/legal guardian is a four-year college graduate
- Rural
- Students must be rising 9th graders.
- Student's Grade Point Average (GPA) must be a minimum of 2.5 or higher to be accepted.
- Students should have an interest in a Health Science or STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) Career.

Application Process

- The student must complete a HSTA application and submit the **completed** application and a copy of their grade transcript to the Field Site Coordinator.
- **NO STUDENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER October 1st OF THEIR 9TH GRADE YEAR.**
- Applications will be reviewed and approved by each region's Local Governing Board.

NOTE: Each club has a limited number of slots available each year. All students are welcome to apply and do not need to meet all the criteria

Criteria for Successful Participation in HSTA

Once a student is accepted into the HSTA program, he or she is expected to follow the guidelines listed below and complete all other necessary steps for successful graduation from HSTA.

- A) Student's overall semester GPA will be a minimum of 2.5 in the 9th grade, and a minimum of 3.0 in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, based on the previous semester reported GPA. If a student is having problems maintaining the required GPA in any subject, **it is the student's responsibility to notify the HSTA teacher or Field Sites Coordinator (FSC) of a problem, as soon as possible, so that any available help may be provided in a timely manner.**
- B) Students must attend a minimum of 70% of all HSTA meetings per semester or make arrangements to be excused with the HSTA teacher.
- C) Students must complete a minimum of 75 documented hours of approved community service prior to completion of the tuition and fee waiver application in their senior year
- D) Students must complete and present a yearly HSTA science project at the HSTA science symposium. Successful completion includes turning in all components by the deadline given by your FSC, and receiving a passing score.
 - If a student is unable to present his/her science project at the science symposium, the student must document the reason for this and submit it to his/her Local Governing Board at the earliest possible opportunity **before** the scheduled symposium date in order to obtain an approved absence for the symposium.
 - If the student's absence is approved, the student must present his/her project at a public forum approved by the Local Governing Board.
- E) Students must successfully complete **at least two** of the campus-based summer camps before their senior year.
- F) Students will be on probation for not meeting academic or attendance requirements for **ONLY ONE** semester during their entire participation in the HSTA program. If students fail to meet academic or attendance requirements for a second semester, they will be dismissed from HSTA.
- G) If a student should fail to comply with the program participation requirements, the student will be dismissed from the HSTA program by written notification.
 - The student has the right to appeal the dismissal decision by notification in writing to the Local Governing Board within 10 working days of receipt of the certified dismissal. [See Website: Students, Teachers & Parents].
 - If the student does not agree with the appeal decision of the Local Governing Board, he/she may appeal in writing to the HSTA Joint Governing Board or designated committee within 10 working days of receipt of Local Governing Board decision.

- H) Students are responsible for meeting paperwork deadlines. If a student should fail to comply with the program participation requirements, the student will be dismissed from the HSTA program by written notification via certified mail. Please return all paperwork by **specified deadlines** to the **appropriate** person.

- I) Students shall be suspended from HSTA activities if they are suspended from school and these absences count against the required attendance. A student shall be expelled from HSTA if they are expelled from school or placed in an alternative school setting.

HSTA Attendance Policy

A student shall attend a minimum of 70% of all HSTA meetings per semester or make prior arrangements with the teacher.

- Students should make every effort to be at every meeting/activity, due to the hands-on science experiments and experiences, which cannot be duplicated.
 - Students should attempt to arrange all non-emergency dentist & doctor appointments around club meeting days.
 - HSTA recognizes the importance of a well-rounded student, but when considering participation in an extracurricular activity, students will evaluate its effect on HSTA attendance and must make arrangements with the coach or instructor to allow attendance of club activities.
 - If a student misses school on the day of the club meeting and the school “excuses” that absence, then such constitutes an excusable HSTA absence.
 - Excused absences may be made up via approved outside lab work or **approved** documented health-related community service after the date of the absence. Documentation must be handed in to the Field Site Coordinator before the end of the semester to count for that semester.
- * Student is to contact the teacher before an absence - if unable to do so in person, a phone call or a note will be acceptable.
- ** *Usually, games are excused, practices are not. Check with teacher.*
- *** *Unexcused absences cannot be made up.*

If absent from a meeting or activity, **the student is responsible** for checking with the HSTA teacher to keep up to date on club activities and responsibilities.

Science Symposium

All HSTA students are required to prepare a research science project and do an oral presentation at the HSTA Science Symposium in April or May of each year.

Discussions, team building, research and preparation regarding students' projects will be made during HSTA club meetings throughout the school year. To monitor the science project progress, HSTA requires students to electronically submit paperwork documenting their projects to their Field Site Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator and Community Research Associate.

- Research Document due dates are posted online.
- To successfully complete your HSTA symposium, you must complete and turn in all assigned work by the assigned deadlines given by your teacher or Field Site Coordinator. You must also receive a passing score for the project to be complete. Passing scores are determined by the HSTA Joint Governing Board.
- Failure to meet deadlines will result in disciplinary actions by the Local Governing Board and may result in dismissal from HSTA.

Symposium project completion and presentation is a mandatory activity for all HSTA students each year for successful completion of the HSTA program.

If the student finds he or she cannot attend the symposium due to serious illness or other valid reasons, the student must:

- Contact the Field Site Coordinator as soon as you see that you may have a problem attending the annual symposium to obtain further instructions.
- Request permission from the Local Governing Board to present the project at a different location and time. **The request must be made at the earliest possible opportunity before the symposium** and must be approved by the Local Governing Board prior to the Science Symposium.
- Present the project before a local public forum as directed by the Local Governing Board and receive a passing score as determined by the HSTA Joint Governing Board.

Summer Institute Camps

Each summer HSTA students in good standing within their local clubs are given the opportunity to attend summer camps on a West Virginia college campus. Students must hand in the appropriate summer camp paperwork by the deadline to qualify. **Students are encouraged to attend all four summer camps. Students must complete at least two summers in order to fulfill HSTA graduation requirements.**

The camps are:

- Freshmen Camp (An introduction to STEM and Health Sciences)
 - Students going into the 9th grade
- Sophomore Camp (Students are immersed in a STEM and/or Health Science Topic)
 - Students going into the 10th grade
- Junior/Biomedical Camp (Students explore biomedical topics that impact health and wellness)
 - Students going into the 11th grade
- Senior Camp (Topic depends on funding)
 - - Students going into the 12th grade

Summer Camp for 9th -11th grade students are one week long programs. They run from Sunday afternoon through Friday afternoon.

Students going into their senior year are given the opportunity when **funding is available** to attend a WVU college class at no cost. Students, who successfully pass the course, may possibly be given a chance to earn free college credit.

Transportation to and from summer camp is provided by buses at no cost to the students. Bus departure and arrival times vary per each region, and students will be notified the last of June of the bus schedule for their area.

Students are required to attend all scheduled classes and events during summer camp.

Although not required, after graduation all HSTA students who are interested in becoming health care professionals are given the opportunity to attend a four-week summer program called HCOP HAPPEN, which further prepares them for college life as well providing them with a college credit class and a stipend. If interested, contact the Field Site Coordinator in January of your senior year for more information.

Community Service

Each student is required to complete a minimum of 75 documented hours of approved community service prior to completion of the tuition and fee waiver application in their senior year. To meet this criterion, proposed community service work must be approved by Local Governing Board (LGB) or their designee.

Many projects qualify as community service and individual regions determine what qualifies in their clubs, your teacher or FSC can tell you what community service projects you can use for HSTA. **If in doubt whether a project qualifies, ask your FSC or LGB.**

Community Service is defined as **volunteer participation**. If you receive pay or are reimbursed for any of these activities, they are considered services rendered, **NOT** community service work.

Documentation of approved community service should include:

- Date, type, and place of activity
- Beginning and ending time frame
- Name of person/facility to whom service was provided
- Signature of authorized facilitator or recipient of services.

Summary of Successful Completion of HSTA

Successful completion of HSTA includes meeting the following factors:

- Meets GPA requirements
- 70% Attendance of activities
- Maintain good behavior in school and at HSTA events
- 75 hours of documented approved community service
- Completing, presenting and passing science symposium projects each year
- Attendance and completion of at least two Summer Institutes camps.
- Submission of the completed HSTA Waiver Application by the specified deadline required by your local governing board.

It is recommended that each student keep a portfolio, notebook or electronic file of his/her active participation in the HSTA program. This written record will be very beneficial in completing questions on the HSTA waiver application during your senior year of high school, and in renewal of the HSTA waiver when in college or university.

Please note that the HSTA tuition waiver:

- Does not include the cost of books, room and board, transportation and most college fees.
- Is not available for private colleges.
- Can be used for undergraduate, some graduate, and/or health professional school fees.
- It is important that you complete the Waiver Application in your senior year of high school even if you qualify for other funding in order to have the waiver available should you need to use it in gaining a degree in your chosen field.
- Is worth different amounts at different colleges and/or universities.
- Have different rules at each college and/or universities (GPA, hours, etc.).
- Your tuition waiver may vary depending on other financial awards you receive. You can find more information about using your HSTA waiver at <https://health.wvu.edu/health-sciences-and-technology-academy/resources/hsta-graduates/> or by contacting the HSTA Graduate Coordinator at 304-293-0769 or kkasten@hsc.wvu.edu

Benefits for Students

In addition to being eligible to receive the HSTA waiver for tuitions for successfully completing the four-year HSTA program, the following incentives are available to all HSTA students:

SAT - ACT TEST FEES

HSTA will only pay for a total of two regular admissions (i.e. no late fees) of either the SAT or the ACT testing required for college admittance - this can be

- two fees for taking either the SAT or ACT twice, or
- the fee for taking each test (SAT and ACT) once.

Students must prepay the fees for each test at the time of registering, however, after completing the exam and receiving their test scores, they can then submit a copy of the test results and receipt of payment to the Field Site Coordinator for reimbursement of the test fee. Provisions for prior payment of fees for financially disadvantaged students may be made with some Local Governing Boards.

Directions can be found at the bottom of the webpage: <https://health.wvu.edu/health-sciences-and-technology-academy/resources/students/>

*HSTA does not cover preparatory courses for ACT or SAT

**HSTA does not cover graduate school entrance tests including the MCAT or GRE.

HSTA Tuition Waiver Information

Origin of the Waivers

These waivers are set forth and regulated through **Sections 18B-10-4b** and **18B-10-6** of the West Virginia State Code.

The following points serve as general guidelines only and are not intended to convey the only policies regarding the administration of the HSTA Undergraduate, Graduate, and Health Professions Fee Waivers.

For a more detailed explanation please see your field site coordinator or <https://health.wvu.edu/health-sciences-and-technology-academy/resources/hsta-graduates/> or the HSTA Waiver Quick Guide <https://health.wvu.edu/media/16789/waiver-quick-guide-2021.pdf>

Primary Policies for All HSTA Waivers

- Awarded to successful graduates of HSTA
- Provided by “state” colleges and universities only
- Granted to full time students only
- Institutions (colleges and/or universities) set their own
- Do not cover all college expenses

HSTA Undergraduate Waiver

- Granted for 8 semesters only
- Students should complete the FAFSA and any other forms of financial aid
- Students should apply for Promise Scholarship in addition to the HSTA Waivers
 - Promise Scholarship may cover more college expenses
 - Some schools will use HSTA and Promise to cover more expenses
 - HSTA waivers can be deferred while Promise is used
 - HSTA can be used when Promise is no longer available
 - HSTA Graduate Waiver may be available after Promise

HSTA Health Professions Fee Waiver (8)

- In addition to the HSTA Undergraduate Waiver or the Promise Scholarship, the HSTA Health Professions Fee is used to offset some fees charged to students pursuing majors in Health Sciences at certain universities

HSTA Graduate Waiver

- Available for select graduate programs only at WVU, Marshall and Concord. A list of available majors can be found at <https://health.wvu.edu/health-sciences-and-technology-academy/resources/hsta-graduates/eligible-graduate-school-waiver-majors/>
Available for limited terms
- As well as graduate degrees will cover: Medical School, Dental School, and Pharmacy School

Continuation of HSTA Waivers

- Consent to release of college records
- Follow college policies regarding successful academic progress
- Submit HSTA Waiver Maintenance and College Update Form each Spring while attending college

HSTA Governance

HSTA Local Governing Board

HSTA decisions and administration are made at the local level by a local governing board (LGB) **If you have an issue that needs to be reviewed by the local governing board, please contact either your local Field Site Coordinator or Secretary, or one of your Local Governing Board representatives for meeting dates and times.** [See [HSTA Regional Field Site Coordinators and Staff - HSTA Contacts](#)]

The Local Governing Board (LGB) takes its responsibility to students and to the HSTA program seriously. When HSTA policy calls for the dismissal of a student, the student has the right to appeal to the LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD for reinstatement in the HSTA program. It is vital that the student make the most effective presentation possible during the appeal process. Proper guidelines are designed to help the student make an appeal for reinstatement before the Local Governing Board and can be found at <https://health.wvu.edu/health-sciences-and-technology-academy/resources/students/dismissal-appeal-process/>

WV HSTA Joint Governing Board

The HSTA Joint governing board sets the overall policies and procedure for HSTA and ensures they are followed correctly by the Local Governing Boards (LGB's). The HSTA joint governing board is made up of representatives from all the HSTA regions across the state. The HSTA joint governing board and its subcommittees have final authority over any HSTA decisions.

HSTA CONTACTS

Field Sites			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
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