

Suggested Guidelines For Non-Traditional Students

Students that desire eligibility to participate in activities or sports at a MSHSAA member school must meet the requirements set forth in Section 2 of the MSHSAA Handbook, entitled ***Student Essential By-Laws***. Students that are enrolled less than full-time in-seat at the member school (“Non-Traditional Option 1 students/NT1”), and students for whom the school is only transcribing credit for the two or more seat-time, credit-bearing classes taken (“Non-Traditional Option 2 students/NT2”), should be very familiar with By-Law 2.1.1, Bona fide student and By-Law 2.3.4/2.3.6, Academic Requirements (HS/JRH). Schools that choose to allow Non-Traditional students (who meet the requirements) to participate in activities/sports shall design policies and procedures to **INSURE** the students are meeting the Academic Standard for equality and fairness in competition both **WITHIN** your school (students competing with and against each other for a spot on a team), and against the students at other schools. Local schools may be more restrictive than the MSHSAA By-Laws. The academic review process that is necessary to confirm ongoing academic eligibility of Non-Traditional students is probably **very similar** to the review that schools currently conduct when a student enrolls in your school for the first time after being enrolled in a non-traditional educational environment.

80% Rule: How many “outside” classes must we confirm/monitor are being taken and/or passed for a Non-Traditional Student?

Your Academic Structure:	7-hr day (each class 0.5 credit)	8-block (each class 0.5 credit)	4-block (each class 1.0 credit)
Maximum Credit Available per semester at your School (full time)	3.5 credits	4.0 credits	4.0 credits
Credit Needed to meet 80% Rule for full-time, NT1, and NT2	3.0 credits	3.5 credits	4.0 credits
NT1: Amount of credit that must be approved and transcribed by your school for eligibility as an NT1 (college/virtual/etc.)	3.0 credits	3.5 credits	4.0 credits
NT2: Seat-Time credits that must be taken at school by Non-Traditional 2 student (=credit minimum – school may require more)	1.0 credits	1.0 credits	1.0 credits
NT2: Leftover, non-transcribed credit (taken elsewhere) required for eligibility and confirmed by your school in order for student to meet 80% Rule for Academic Eligibility as an NT2. (Note: This amount provides no buffer; Any F = Not eligible next semester)	2.0 credits	2.5 credits	3.0 credits

CREATING YOUR POLICY:

In an effort to provide assistance to MSHSAA member schools that are in the process of determining local policies, procedures, oversight and criteria for the review, and possible local approval, of courses/credits not being taken at the school and/or not being placed on the school transcript, the following ideas are offered for consideration.

- A. **Upon initial transfer of enrollment of the NT student to your school:**
 Before initial eligibility is considered and ultimately determined, the student must be accepted by the member school and enrolled. Review past classes, academic history, credits, logs, attendance, transcripts, etc. to determine “prior semester” credit earned and the grade of placement. Double check student’s age and semesters; semesters taken in other states **and/or in non-traditional academic environments** count as semesters toward the semesters of eligibility limits in By-Law 2.4. Determine if you “could” or will grant credit on your transcript for the courses taken and passed (as “transfer credit”) – calculate the 80%: Does the student meet the 80% rule for the semester prior? If not, the student will not be eligible for the first semester as a bona fide student (2.1.1) at your school.

- B. **Confirm that the student meets the requirements to be viewed as a bona fide student; if not, the student will not be eligible for activity participation:**
 1. NT2: Is the student enrolling in seat-time, credit-bearing subjects/classes (minimum of 1.0 unit of credit) at your school with credit being placed on the transcript?
 2. NT1/NT2: Is the student enrolled in sufficient total courses/credits **that you approve and validate** and/or transcript and which allow the student to meet the 80% rule? (See chart above) (NT1-transcript all; NT2-your choice whether or not to transcribe)

Excerpt from By-Law 2.3.4.c (NT2):

“The high school administration confirms after a full academic review that the student is further enrolled in courses taken outside of the school which bring the student up to the academic credit requirements outlined in By-Law 2.3.2 (80%). Each local school will determine its own oversight, standards, and criteria for approval of such outside courses/credits, as well as the procedures to determine success/credit confirmation for academic eligibility for the current and following semester. It is not necessary that such confirmed credits be placed on the high school transcript, but may be listed, at the school’s discretion.

- C. Documentation suggestions for review of Academic Enrollment (to confirm equivalent credit is being attempted prior to **each** semester and before any participation takes place):
1. Curriculum plan and provider information that is being used for outside classes
 2. Any accreditation information or testimonial evidence of acceptability
 3. Specific classes being attempted and credit available for each; course syllabi
 4. Official timeline for each outside class is needed – when does it start, when does it end in comparison to your semester?
- D. Documentation suggestions for review of Academic Success at close of each semester for confirming continuing academic eligibility (NT2 for which you may not be transcribing credits):
1. Work log / Attendance log of student and hours of instruction
 2. Sample work product – papers written, worksheets completed, tests taken
 3. Grades Achieved; transcript information
 4. Performance/grades on any testing you choose to perform to confirm achievement
- E. Other criteria to consider in determining the School’s Policy:
1. If the non-traditional student participates in Band, Orchestra, or Choir, must they be enrolled in the associated class in order to participate in music activities?
 2. Should non-traditional students be required to select from accredited online courses (Cognia, Launch, etc.) in order to count them toward academic eligibility?
 3. Should non-traditional students be tested (EOC or other school testing) to confirm success for all appropriate courses at the end of the semester?
 4. Should the non-traditional student be subject to our local school’s grading scale?
 5. Should the non-traditional student be subject to our local academic standards which are more restrictive than MSHSAA’s? (No F policy, GPA requirement, etc.)
 6. Should there be periodic checks (review of coursework/work product) to insure the non-traditional student is making standard progress in the courses being taken?
 7. How will the school confirm that the student is “regularly attending” credit-bearing classes, as required by the by-law, when the classes are being taken elsewhere? Local definition may be needed.
 8. Should non-traditional students be required to comply with all local rules for participation in athletics and activities (drug testing, peer tutoring or any additional local requirements)?
 9. What transportation is or is not available for non-traditional students coming to school at times other than school transportation is provided? Make your expectations clear beforehand.
 10. Should non-traditional students follow local school rules regarding transportation to/from contests?
- F. Other requirements that are set forth in By-Laws:
1. Provide clear confirmation of **your school’s close of the semester**: the same timeline for completion of classes is in place for Non-Traditional students (required in by-law).
 2. Non-traditional students must meet the **essential eligibility standards**, including the citizenship standard, semesters rule, age rule, etc.
 3. All non-traditional students should be held to the same policies and standards as traditional students in the high school, unless specific circumstances dictate otherwise.
 4. Reminder on when a non-traditional student becomes a “**transfer student**” – Any student whose enrollment status changes from being a non-bona fide student to being a bona fide student is a transfer student, and becomes ineligible to represent a member school until a transfer form is filed and an eligibility ruling is rendered (2.3.4.d).
 5. Each member school has the ability to be more restrictive than the MSHSAA By-Laws when establishing local policies. (2.1.2, 2.2.3, 2.9.1)