

# Graduation Requirement Waivers and Appeals

## Graduation Requirement Emergency Waiver (GREW)

*The State Board of Education (SBE) adopted permanent rules in July 2021 for an emergency waiver program. These rules apply to students graduating in the Classes of 2020 and beyond, during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.*

Under the emergency waiver program, districts may still apply to the SBE for authority to waive certain state graduation requirements for individual students in the Class of 2022 due to disruptions in the students' education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If a district applied to the SBE for this authority for the Class of 2021, they do not need to apply again this year, nor do they need to approve another board resolution.

Prior to granting a GREW, district and/or school staff must:

- **Receive approval** from the SBE to administer the emergency waiver program.
- **Adopt a resolution** for the waiver program that includes processes for:
  - A review of decisions to decline a waiver that includes review by a panel including at least one school counselor and educators with specialized expertise, if appropriate.
  - A student's appeal of a decision to decline a waiver.
- Make a **good faith effort** to help the student meet all graduation requirements, such as providing summer school and other expanded learning opportunities, online learning options, course equivalencies and mastery-based credit options.
- **Use existing authority** to grant "student circumstances" waivers and other flexibilities to help the student meet specific credit requirements.
- Review the student's records and **identify how the student has demonstrated postsecondary preparation** for their next steps identified in the student's HSBP.
  - Options for demonstrating preparation may be determined locally, and examples are provided in rules.
  - See [WAC 180-111-020](#) for examples of postsecondary preparation.
- Ensure **eligible students receive guidance** to support them in determining if a GREW is actually needed.
  - Only credits that are least applicable or not integral to the preparation steps for the student's postsecondary plans can be waived.
  - Communicate the benefits and limitations of the waiver and the option to decline the GREW if offered.

Under this emergency waiver program, subject area credits and graduation pathway options may be waived for students who can still demonstrate postsecondary preparation. Up to 2 core or flexible subject area credits may be waived with a GREW, provided that:

- The student earns at least a total of 20 credits after all waivers and flexibilities are applied; and,
- The subject area credits may not be in the same content area.

**Note:** Using the GREW is limited to waiving only credit and graduation pathway requirements impacted by disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The HSBP graduation requirement may be considered “MET” once all required components and processes are completed (see pgs. 7-11 for detailed information).

## **Equitable Administration, Records and Reporting**

Districts must record and report on the use of the GREW, disaggregate GREW usage data by student groups, and take appropriate actions to ensure equitable administration of the GREW if disproportionality is found.

For each student who graduates by using a GREW, or in relation to overall GREW usage, districts must:

- Document in the individual student record (within their cumulative file, HSBP, transcript and/or student management system) the following:
  - School’s good faith effort to help the student meet graduation requirements,
  - Courses, term, and amount of credit(s) waived,
  - Whether the graduation pathway option was waived, and/or
  - How the student demonstrated postsecondary preparation.
- Report on each student’s transcript:
  - Waived credit(s) using the GREW with a “V” code during the term waived.
    - Any other waived credits are **not** posted to the transcript.
  - Graduation pathway = “WAIVED” or “MET”, based on if a GREW was used.
- Collect data on:
  - The number of waivers requested and not granted.
  - Demographics on waivers granted and not granted by student group to:
    - Use by the district in evaluating equitable administration of the waiver.
    - Report student-level data to OSPI via EDS/Graduation Alternatives.
- Report to SBE on:
  - Districtwide good faith efforts to help students meet graduation requirements.
  - Actions taken to ensure equity in administration of the GREW.

Districts may grant a GREW to students earning an IB diploma. Districts may also grant a waiver of the graduation pathway requirement only to students in later graduation cohorts, such as students in the Class of 2023, who plan on graduating early in the 2021-2022 school year. These current juniors must meet all state subject area credit requirements and local graduation requirements, subject to local policies, for their 2023 cohort year, and complete a HSBP (see pages 7-11).

**Note:** The Expedited Assessment Appeals (EAA) waiver is only available for students in the Classes of 2014-20 . The EAA waiver is not an option for the Class of 2021 or 2022. Read OSPI’s January 2020 Bulletin [#B007-20](#) for additional details about the reporting processes for the graduation pathways instituted after the EAA ended.

## Two-Credit Academic Waiver for “Student Circumstances”

In 2019, local school boards should have adopted policies in line with [RCW 28A.230.090](#), which changed the criteria for which (up-to-two) high school credits may be waived.

<b>What Stayed the Same</b>	None of the waived credits can be any of the <b>17 mandatory ‘core’ credits</b> , as identified by the SBE. See the infographic of required credits on the <a href="#">SBE’s website</a> for more information.
<b>What Changed</b>	The waiver for up-to-two credits is now based on “a student’s circumstances.” Before HB 1599, the requirement was that the credit waiver was based on “ <i>unusual</i> circumstances.”

## Special, Unavoidable Circumstance Appeal

For students in the Class of 2019 or earlier who transferred during their 12th grade year after the beginning of the second semester or February 15 (whichever is earlier), a Special, Unavoidable Circumstance Appeal application can be submitted for OSPI review. More information can be found on the [OSPI website](#).

## 11th and 12th Grade Transfer Students

### Out-of-State Transfer Waiver (Class of 2019 and earlier)

Students in the Class of 2019 or earlier who transferred into a Washington public school from another state or an in-state, non-public school setting after the administration of the statewide Smarter Balanced or WA-AIM assessments will still be eligible to access Graduation Alternatives. More information can be found on the [OSPI website](#).