

TEXAS FFA ASSOCIATION

CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENTS HANDBOOK 2027-2031



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ELIGIBILITY & PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS	3
ADVANCEMENT	4
ENTRY FEE	4
CONTEST CONDUCT	5
MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT & CALCULATOR POLICIES	5
SCORING, TABULATION & AWARDS	6
DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS	6
ACCOMMODATIONS & ADA	6
DISCIPLINARY ACTION	7
CONFLICT RESOLUTION & APPEALS	7
INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY	7

ELIGIBILITY & PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Each participant must be a bona fide dues-paying FFA member in good standing with the local chapter, state association and the national organization, be listed on the state roster, AND be under the age of 21 at the time of the national FFA event. All entries shall be verified upon entry to the state event. Substitutes must be submitted and approved by Texas FFA Competitive Events Coordinator before the start of the contest.
2. Each participant must be enrolled in an agriculture, food and natural resources course at the time of the event or have completed an agriculture, food and natural resources course during the current academic year. Enrollment will be verified in case of a protest regarding eligibility. All national qualifying teams will verify enrollment prior to certification for national competition.
3. A student who has previously participated on a state-winning team and/or participated at the National FFA contests are disqualified from competing in any state qualifying competitions in the future.

A student who participates in an affiliated contest may compete at state qualifying competitions. Participants advancing to or placing in nationally affiliated contests should refer to the specific rules of each contest to determine their eligibility for returning in subsequent years. The affiliated contests listed are recognized by the committee because their rules align with ours and require our approval for advancement. Contests outside of our jurisdiction are not subject to our rules and operate independently.

Students who qualify to participate in the following may claim participation in a National contest on a scholarship application: NAILE, All American, World Dairy, Denver, American Royal, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts National Land & Range, State Fair of Texas Wool Nationals.

All other contests will NOT be recognized as "true" National contests For further details, see below for **National Contest Affiliations.**

4. If a student who is ineligible for any reason, including, but not limited to academic failure, FFA membership, courses enrollment or participation on a national or state winning team, the student's score shall be nullified and the team's score shall be recalculated. If the event is a team activity or includes a team activity, the team with the ineligible team member shall be disqualified. If it is determined that a teacher or other school representative has knowingly entered an ineligible student, the provisions of the disciplinary action rules listed below, shall be applied.
5. Area coordinators will certify all teams eligible to participate in the state events.
6. A chapter may enter one team in each event at the appropriate level: area for elimination events and state for events for which there is not a qualifying event. **In case of exceptions, contest rules will take precedence over the general rules.**
7. Team members must be from the same chapter. If a four-member team is entered, in events where allowed, the three highest individual scores are used to calculate the team score, with the exception of Ag Communications, Ag Sales and Food Science in which scores from all four members will be used. However, all four members are eligible for individual awards. The fourth member of a team placing first shall not be eligible for the same event in future years. Incomplete teams are not eligible for team recognition or qualification for state competition. Teams that have more active participants than are allowed in a given event shall be disqualified once it is verified by event officials that the additional members are from the chapter in question.
8. A contestant may compete in only one State contest per day. Contestants may compete in multiple Area contests on the same day, provided contest schedules do not overlap. Students may not participate in any contests with conflicting times.

ADVANCEMENT

1. Each event will be limited to a minimum of five teams or a maximum of 15 percent or major fraction thereof of the number of fully eligible teams participating with exception of the following:
 - (1) Applied Agricultural Engineering - limited to three teams from each area
 - (2) Agricultural Sales - limited to three teams from each area
 - (3) Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems - limited to three teams from each area
 - (4) Tractor Technician - limited to three teams from each area
 - (5) Agronomy
 - (6) Ag Communications
 - (7) Environmental & Natural Resources
 - (8) Food Science & Technology
 - (9) Marketing Plan
 - (10) Plant ID

*All area qualifying contests are subject to the application of general rule #9 (if applicable), which takes precedence over the above stated qualification numbers. Additionally, with the exception of Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems, teams with the same team score for the last qualifying state berth shall be certified for state competition by the area coordinators. **In CDE's in which an area has not reached its maximum number for qualification, teams from other areas may be certified for state competitions.***

2. Qualifiers for state level Career Development Events, beginning for the 2022 State Events, area events held at the same location, on the same date, will have Wildcard State Qualifying teams for the state level events.
 - a. **Wildcard** is defined as the *final state qualifying position*. State qualifiers are defined as the top 5 or top 15% (whichever total is greater) of complete teams competing in each contest, unless individual contest rules specify otherwise.
 - b. Wildcard qualifiers will advance to the state event based on the highest scores competing, regardless of the area they are from.
 - a) EX: 4 Areas compete in an area CDE contest (same date/location). The final state qualifying position (wildcard) from each of these Areas would become open state qualifications. The 4 open positions would be filled by the next 4 highest scores of the entire contest, regardless of area affiliation.
 - c. **Wildcard Qualifiers will not increase the number of teams competing at the state level.**
 - d. The state CDE chairman will be responsible for working with Area Coordinators and the Competitive Events & Recognition Coordinator to designate state advancing teams.

ENTRY FEE

1. The entry fee is \$60 per team; except for Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems and Applied Agricultural Engineering which is \$125 per team.
2. All registration is electronic via <http://www.judgingcard.com>. Entry fees must be paid in accordance with state FFA policies regarding payment of entries and payment policies of the events entry management provider. No refund can be made for teams which do not participate. Entries not made on judgingcard.com on or before the deadline established by the event providers risk disqualification or may be charged a late fee. If the event qualification dates do not allow for compliance to established timelines, providers shall accept these entries and waive late fees. Teachers must notify providers of such circumstances.

CONTEST CONDUCT

1. Students may use their notes made during the event for all events in which questions will be asked concerning the classes. No notes may be used in the written exams.

2. Neither team advisors nor team members of a state qualifying team are to visit the State CDE site, or any facility or building related to the university host, for an event for which they have qualified. The intent of this rule is to prohibit teams from gaining a possible competitive advantage from being at the facility where contest animals or materials are housed. This prohibition begins on the day following area events hosted on that site. Violation will result in disqualification. Competing onsite as a bona fide 4-H member does not constitute violation of this rule.
3. Teams arriving after the contest begins will be permitted to participate at the stage of the contest upon their arrival after dress code, clipboards, and other clipboard materials have been checked. The participants will NOT be permitted to go back and make up any part of the contest they missed due to their late arrival.
4. Contestants will be sorted by the provider into groups which do not include members from the same team. Leaving the assigned group to join a group not assigned may result in disqualification. Contestants who leave the assigned group to join a fellow team member shall be disqualified along with the team member whose group was joined as a result of the unauthorized move.
5. During any event, students are not permitted to leave the event area unless accompanied by an event official. Event materials are not to be taken from the site. Contest providers are encouraged to clearly mark boundaries.
6. General and contest superintendents, assistants, and section leaders will exercise every effort to enforce all contest rules. Event superintendents shall notify the general superintendent for that event site of all disqualifications and the circumstances surrounding incidents meriting disqualification. The state FFA office shall be notified of all such disqualifications.
7. Institutional providers will be responsible for selecting qualified personnel for conducting each event.

MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT & CALCULATOR POLICIES

1. Students may not bring pictures, printed material, or any items that have not been issued or authorized.
2. Contest stickers must remain visible at all times, preferably attached to the contestant's shirt. Moving or removing the sticker may cause it to lose adhesion and no longer stick properly.
3. Team members must provide their own:
 - a. clear, colorless, plastic clipboard. Clipboards should be: free of all current or recycled lapel contest stickers; must be sticker free (excluding school logos, which were applied when the clipboard was manufactured), ruler free,
 - b. **and/or** clean folder, regardless of color, with the following items: genuine Judging Card scan sheet, optional copy of the scan sheet, or Texas FFA CDE drop sheet,
 - c. **and/or** two sheets of **lined or unlined blank paper**.
 - d. A teacher committee will be responsible for ensuring compliance of this rule.
 - e. Violation of these rules once an event has started will result in team disqualification.
 - f. Students may not bring a magnifying glass. Magnifying glasses of the same magnification will be supplied by the provider for contests when necessary.
 - g. The Texas FFA Website provides picture examples of compliant and non compliant materials.
4. Any communication, verbal or nonverbal, between participants during an event will be sufficient cause to eliminate the team. Communication devices (cell phone, tablets, smart watches, smart glasses, fitness trackers, headphones and/or other similar devices, or any device possessing advanced technology etc.) shall NOT be allowed in the possession of the contestant during the duration of the contest. Violators shall be disqualified.
5. Calculator models that are allowed in contests that state a calculator is needed: Texas Instruments: TI30xiis TI30xs TI30xa TI36X Casio: fx-100MS fx-100MS-2 Fx-260 Fx-300ES Fx- 300ES Plus, Basic four-function calculator. Programmable calculators will not be allowed

SCORING, TABULATION & AWARDS

1. Scoring and tabulating are completed as quickly as possible in order that results can be announced and awards presented to winning teams. Announced results will not be official until 5:00 p.m. the second working day following the event. Incorrect results will be corrected and the verified state winner will represent Texas in national competition. Individual scores by team members will be made available on the day of the event and/or posted on judgingcard.com. Awards will be presented as results are announced. Plaques and banners will be ordered based on the previous year's participation numbers. Ten teams will receive plaques or banners in events in which participation exceeds ten entries. In other events, the number of awards shall be the number of teams entered, with additional awards ordered as needed and mailed if necessary.
2. The State CDE Chairman shall appoint scoring monitors for each event and provide a list of monitors to the event site general superintendent. Scoring monitors shall examine scores and determine if any wide-spread aberration exists. Scores shall not be announced until verified by a scoring monitor.
3. Individual contestants are responsible for providing accurate scoring information on each scan sheet including team number. Contest officials will not correct, enter or change scan sheet marks or errors. All Scan sheets must be bubbled with No.2 pencil. Individual scores will not be tabulated without the correct team number.
4. Contestants will be given a 10-minutes period at the end of each event to complete their scantron. The section leaders will call for scan sheets. Once scan sheets are submitted to a section leader, they will not be returned to the student.
5. The Texas FFA Competitive Events Coordinator will keep scan sheets for 48 hours following the appeal deadline.
6. In each CDE contest, if tie breakers are unable to determine a clear winner for the high point individual score, co-state champions may be declared for that contest.
7. All Career Development Event (CDE) award orders are finalized on August 1. No changes, reorders, or replacement awards will be issued after this date, including for items that were not claimed or were lost.

DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS

1. Dress code for CDE participation is official FFA dress (for events requiring official dress). **All other contests require** closed toed shoes, full length pants or slacks, collared shirts with sleeves with the exception of Veterinary Science (see contest rules for specific dress code requirements). The only logos permissible on shirts are clothing brand, school or organizational logos. (Clothing brands' logos may not promote alcohol, tobacco or any other brand not consistent with the ideals and principles of the Texas FFA). Shirt collars must be full, folded collars. Capri-type pants shall be deemed to be shorts, not pants or slacks. Contestants not in dress code compliance shall be given an opportunity to remedy the non compliant apparel. Contestants found in the contest in violation of the dress code shall be disqualified. A teacher committee appointed by the state CDE committee chair shall enforce dress code standards.

ACCOMMODATIONS & ADA

1. For students who require a contest accommodation(s), teachers should complete the Texas FFA Contest Accommodations Form found on the Texas FFA Website not less than 14 days before a qualifying event. Requests for special consideration should be made to Texas FFA Competitive Events Coordinator. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Assistance will be provided by a contest official and shall not constitute an advantage for that student or a disadvantage for other contestants. Additional time cannot be provided for completion of events. In case of extreme circumstances, stakeholders should contact the State FFA Office.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

1. If any cause for disqualification is considered a willful act of defiance and the act has the approval of the teacher, the school the student represents will be barred from participation in state events until reinstated by the state executive board. Any advisor found guilty of willfully entering ineligible members in any FFA event will have the school where he/she serves barred from participation until reinstated by the state executive board.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION & APPEALS

1. Appeals concerning district and area standings for recognition and awards shall be resolved by officials at the corresponding levels of competition, appeals must be submitted by the FFA Advisor.
2. The state CDE process is a tournament concept that begins at the district level and culminates at the state event. Unresolved district-level disputes concerning qualification for area competition may be appealed to the respective area executive committee only after the district committee has heard and ruled on the matter in question. Teachers may request a state level review of any such ruling. The state executive committee shall overturn only those decisions that are ruled to be arbitrary or in conflict with state policy.
3. Appeals of area-level decisions concerning state qualification or state event decisions must be filed in writing with the Texas FFA Association executive director no later than 5:00 p.m. on the working day following the decision under appeal. All appeals shall be considered by the executive board.
4. Persons whose judgment may be influenced by a vested interest or a pre-existing relationship that may impair their ability to be fair and impartial must excuse themselves from all deliberations concerning appeals. Subjective qualitative judgments inherent in evaluating event performances may not be appealed.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

1. For state events, the state executive director shall work proactively with providers to assess potential weather and road hazards which could create travel risks for students and teachers. Should inclement weather pose a potential travel risk for groups from any part of the state, the executive director shall consult the state executive board and appropriate experts (such as but not limited to National Weather Service forecasters) to assess potential hazards and consider options for amending event start times or participation schedules to facilitate safer travels, event postponement or cancellation. The Texas FFA Association shall make student safety the top priority in all such decisions; however, the FFA advisor retains ultimate responsibility for the safety and supervision of their students.
2. If possible, the executive director or his or her designee shall notify teachers via e-mail and/or the emergency text messaging system of any impending event decisions regarding inclement weather.
3. District and area associations are to work with their respective executive committees in assessing weather-related travel risks. The state executive director shall work with area event coordinators in adjusting state entry and material submission deadlines for area events postponed due to inclement weather.
4. Due to the nature, location, and logistics of certain contests or events, the Texas FFA Association cannot guarantee the availability of alternative shelter in the event of an emergency, severe weather, natural disaster, or other unforeseen circumstances. Participants acknowledge and accept that emergency response options may be limited depending on the situation, and agree to follow all safety instructions provided by event officials at all times.