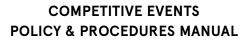# NATIONAL COMPETITIVE EVENTS
POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

Version 1.2

Last revised: 12/22/2023

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PREAMBLE / AUTHORITY

MISSION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Competitive events allow members in good standing to build their personal and professional skills in a broad range of business- and career-related areas through industry-validated learning experiences.

Competitive events:

- Provide an industry-validated learning experience that prepares members for the workforce.
- Align with business and business-related curriculum and course offerings.
- Empower members to grow and develop personally and professionally.
- Engage members in their academic and professional development inside and outside the classroom.
- Allow members to explore, experience, and engage with their academic studies by division.
- Assess members' abilities and allow them to identify areas of strength and growth.
- Welcome all members.
- Recognize member achievement and improvement in their academic studies.

COMPETITIVE EVENTS COMMITTEE (CEC) AUTHORITY

The chair of the Board of Directors shall appoint adult volunteers to the CEC in accordance with FBLA's Bylaws, as well as designate appropriate staff liaisons and external support necessary to accomplish the committee's mission. The Board delegates all appropriate and relevant authority for the fair and deliberate execution of the Competitive Events Program to the CEC. All policy recommendations made by the CEC shall be approved by the Board before they become binding.

This document will serve as a guide to address competitive event questions that arise throughout the membership year, particularly at the National Leadership Conference (NLC). This document and the policies described herein shall be overseen and carried out by the CEC.

DEFINITIONS

Acronyms

CCC	Career Connections Conference
CEC	Competitive Events Committee
NLC	National Leadership Conference
IEP	Individualized Education Program

Key Terminology

Competitive Events Program	The Competitive Events Program consists of 136 competitive events: 23 in the Middle School Division, 77 in the High School Division, 36 in the Collegiate Division.
Policy & Procedures Manual	Document serves as a guide to address competitive event questions and processes.
Competitive Events Guidelines	Document serves as a guide for all competitive events.
Competitive Events Committee	A group of adult volunteers selected from an application process to serve in a decision making and advisory capacity to the Competitive Events Program. The CEC is made up of 13 state and local advisers representing 5 high school, 5 collegiate and 3 middle school positions.
State Leader	This individual administers an FBLA division or divisions at the state level.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors	The Board of Directors is the executive sponsor of the Awards & Recognition program. The Board delegates authority to the CEC to ensure the fair administration of the Competitive Events Program. The Board shall appoint 13 adult volunteers to the CEC subject to its policies. From time to time, the Board shall review the outcomes of the Competitive Events Program and provide strategic direction.

	Further, all policies and procedures of the CEC are subject to Board approval.
CEC	**The CEC is responsible for all activities required to ensure the fair administration of the Competitive Events program. The** [Board of Directors' Volunteer Management Policy](#) **will be followed for CEC members.**
CEC Chair (or Their Designee)	**The CEC chair shall ensure that meetings of the CEC are planned effectively and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner. The CEC chair shall serve as the liaison between the CEC and all external parties (including the Board, other task forces/committees, and National Center staff).**
CEC Vice Chair	**There shall be one Vice Chair for each division. The Vice Chair shall ensure that the division CEC members are participating and lead division-specific conversations.**
Staff Liaisons	**Staff liaisons are employees of the National Center who support the mission of the CEC.**
State Leaders	**State Leaders are responsible for qualifying members to participate in the Competitive Events Program, subject to the appropriate state and national policies. State Leaders are responsible for verifying members registered to compete at the National Leadership Conference.**
Volunteers	**Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that FBLA events run effectively and efficiently.** Currently, volunteer roles are Event Administrators, Judge Managers, Section Leaders, Timers, Event Assistants, and Welcoming Committee members.
Judges	**Judges are responsible for providing critical and constructive feedback to competitors about their participation in competitive events.**
Local Chapter Advisers	**Local chapter advisers are responsible for ensuring their members are correctly registered for NLC competitive events.**
Competitors	**Competitors are dues-paying middle school, high school, and college student members who qualify for competition. They are responsible for following the Competitive Events Guidelines, Honor Code, Code of Ethics, and Dress Code.**

1.0 COMPETITIVE EVENTS OVERVIEW

Competitive events play an integral role in the mission of FBLA. They prepare FBLA members for successful careers in business by providing opportunities for them to apply classroom concepts in a workforce-simulated competitive environment.

The information contained in this document refers to the competitive event process at the national level. State FBLA organizations may elect to modify the events offered at the district/region/section and state levels. Always check state guidelines if competing at the district/region/section and/or state level of competition.

There are several categories of national competitive events:

Category	Description
Chapter Event	A chapter project that a team of competitors presents at the NLC.
Case Competition	A real-life situation is given to a team to present solutions.
Objective Test	An online, objective test administered at the conference focusing on business knowledge.
Presentation Event	The presentation of a project, speech, or interview in front of judges. Competitors may be allowed to use technology, equipment, and/or visual aids as part of the presentation. Check specific guidelines to determine what is allowed.
Production Test	A production test typically consists of two parts: a production test administered and proctored prior to the NLC and an objective test administered on-site at the NLC.
Role-Play Event	Typically, an objective test administered during the NLC. For team events, competitors will test individually, and competitors' scores will be averaged to determine the team score. The top 15 scoring individuals/teams will advance to the final round of competition, consisting of an extemporaneous response to a prompt. Judges will interact with competitors.

View the Competitive Event Guidelines, rating sheets, competencies, and other resources by clicking on the corresponding division below:

Middle School
High School
Collegiate

2.0 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

The Competitive Events Program provides a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible opportunity and environment to all members involved. FBLA's mission is to inspire and prepare students to become community-minded business leaders in a global society through relevant career preparation and leadership experiences. The CEC recognizes that the Competitive Events Program is critical to the member experience and strives to provide a program that is responsive to member needs. FBLA's commitment is to create a program in which members from all backgrounds may perform at their best, compete on an equitable basis, and be recognized for their achievements.

Some efforts to this effect include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing reasonable accommodations to competitors to enable equitable access to the program.
- Recognizing and facilitating the learning accommodations of members, including IEPs.
- Enabling the accommodation of resources to overcome language barriers, including translation services and interpreters.

FBLA meets the criteria specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act for all competitors with accommodations submitted through the conference registration system by the registration deadline. Competitors are encouraged to reach out to the Director of Awards & Recognition to discuss support needed in this area.

Any accommodations received after the registration deadline will be evaluated by CEC and National Center staff to determine the reasonability and feasibility of providing an accommodation.

Refer to section 4.15 for more information.

3.0 FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY

The CEC recognizes that fair competition is the cornerstone of the Competitive Events Program. The CEC is committed to ensuring that fairness and integrity are at the forefront of every decision.

Competitors, directly or through registration by their advisers, are required to acknowledge the Honor Code as part of the NLC registration process. The Honor Code may be found on the FBLA website.

FBLA encourages all parties to report violations of the Honor Code by completing the form found on the **FBLA Help Desk**.

3.1 Artificial Intelligence

FBLA will not ban the use of AI software, although competitors should be aware of potential biases in data and algorithms, as well as possible inaccurate information provided by the software. The AI tools used should be in line with the FBLA Honor Code, to ensure ethical and responsible use of AI, promote fair competition, and uphold the integrity of FBLA events.

Competitors should be aware that any work produced by tools is not their own work; all use of AI software must be appropriately credited and cited. Use of AI must not involve any form of plagiarism or unauthorized use of copyrighted materials. Competitors must be able to explain the use of AI to judges.

3.2 Source Citing

Proper citation is crucial to avoid plagiarism and give credit to the original authors. Always consult the most recent edition of the **MLA Handbook** for the latest guidelines on using the MLA (Modern Language Association) format.

4.0 NLC PROCESSES

4.1 Eligibility

All Divisions: Middle School, High School, Collegiate

Competitors must compete in the division for which they are registered members.
- **Middle School: Grades 5–9**
- **High School: Grades 9–12**
- **Collegiate: Grades 13+**

Middle School

- Each state may submit four entries in all events.
- Each competitor may compete in one individual/team event and one chapter event.
- Each competitor must compete in all parts of an event to be eligible for awards.
- A team shall consist of one to three competitors.
- All competitors on a team must be members of the same local chapter.
- Members may only compete in an event at the NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top 10 of that event at the NLC. If a member places in the

top 10 of an event at the NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at future NLCs, unless the event has been modified beyond a name change. Chapter events are exempt from this procedure.

High School

- Each state may submit four entries in all events.
- Each competitor may compete in only one individual/team event and one chapter event.
- Each competitor must compete in all parts of an event to be eligible for awards.
- A team shall consist of one to three competitors, excluding Parliamentary Procedure, where a team shall consist of four or five competitors.
- All competitors on a team must be members of the same local chapter.
- Members may only compete in an event at the NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top 10 of that event at the NLC. If a member places in the top 10 of an event at the NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at future NLCs, unless the event has been modified beyond a name change. Chapter events are exempt from this procedure.

Collegiate

- Each state may submit four entries in all events.
- Each competitor may compete in only two individual/team events and one chapter event.
- Each competitor must compete in all parts of an event to be eligible for awards.
- A team shall consist of one to four competitors depending on the competitive event. Check event guidelines for allowed team sizes.

4.2 Timeline

All registration and travel plans are solely governed by the local and/or state level, with local- and state-level policies also governing competitive events eligibility requirements.

Competitors will be registered for NLC competitive events through the National Leadership Conference registration system. The registration deadline for NLC competition is 11:59 p.m. ET on May 7, 2024.

State Leaders will verify all competitor registrations by 11:59 p.m. ET on the second Friday in May. State Leaders can update any competitor registrations without penalty until 11:59 p.m. ET on the second Friday in May.

All prejudged projects and reports must be submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. ET on May 7, 2024. It is the competitor and their adviser's responsibility to ensure all links are available for judge viewing. Judges who are unable to view entries will be unable to rate the pre-judge component and the competitor will receive a zero score for that part of the competition.

All production tests must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. ET by May 14, 2024. All production tests must be uploaded to the required online platform. It is the competitor and their adviser's responsibility to ensure all links are available for judge viewing. Judges who are unable to view entries will be unable to rate the pre-judge component and the competitor will receive a zero score for that part of the competition.

4.3 Adjustments to Competitive Event Registration

If an FBLA member is not registered for a competitive event or is registered for the wrong competitive event after the second Friday in May, a fee will be assessed to properly register the member for the event. The fee will apply to each member added. Additional entries cannot exceed the maximum entries of four per event, per state. The change must be approved by the State Leader, and fees must be paid before a change will be made.

Fees assessed per change made are as follows:

- Second Saturday in May until the first Tuesday in June: $25
- First Tuesday in June to seven days prior to the start of the NLC: $75
- Six days prior to the start of the NLC until the competitive event: $200

National Center staff will work with the CEC and conference management system to provide state and local advisers access to competitive event registration lists.

Fees collected will go to the NLC Scholarship Fund.

4.4 Change in Posted Schedules

Competitors will be allowed to compete until such time that results are finalized, or the accommodation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event. (Late arrivals will be accommodated no later than 15 minutes past the posted start time.) If judges have left the competitive event area, it is no longer possible to compete.

Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals.

Testing or presenting prior to the scheduled time is not allowed in the Middle School or High School divisions.

4.5 Cheating

The cheating policy aligns with the [Honor Code](#) and Competitive Events Guidelines. Violations of the Honor Code will result in disqualification.

4.6 Roles & Responsibilities for Administering Competitive Events

Role	Responsibility
State Leader	State Leader is needed to appoint trusted adults to serve in competitive events volunteer roles.
Event Administrators	The administrator oversees the running of the event at the National Leadership Conference. They orient and organize the volunteers and ensure the event is running on time. Administrators serve as the liaisons between the Competitive Events Committee and the event volunteers. State Leaders and their designees may serve as administrators. These individuals are responsible for the on-site coordination of the event, including greeting judges, answering their "how-to" questions, assisting judges in determining finalists and winners, and flagging CEC members as necessary when questions arise. Administrators may only answer policy and procedure questions addressed in the informational documents that are provided to judges and administrators; otherwise, a CEC member must decide.
Judge Manager	The judge manager oversees their event judges at the National Leadership Conference. They orient and organize the judges and ensure the event is running on time. Judge managers serve as the liaisons between the Competitive Events Committee, Event Administrator, and the event judges.
Section Leader	The section leader oversees their event section at the National Leadership Conference. They greet the competitors and, working with the timer, ensure the event section is running on time. Section leaders work with competitors and judges within their section and report to the event administrator.
Timer	The timer keeps time during their event section at the National Leadership Conference. They greet the competitors and, working with the section leader and/or event administrator, ensure the event is running on time.
Event Assistant	The event assistant provides a calming, welcoming demeanor to competitors. The event assistant checks competitors in for their event and moves them to the holding area for their competition. They work with the section leader to ensure the event section is running on time.

Test Proctor	The proctor protects the integrity and administration of online tests administered at the National Leadership Conference.
Welcoming Committee	To provide a consistent application of dress code penalty points, the Welcoming Committee is tasked with providing an opportunity for competitors to follow the dress code and will be confirming dress code penalty points.
Training	Volunteers will receive training prior to the NLC. An online session will be held where individuals will obtain their instructions and assignments and may ask questions. A link to a recording of the training will be provided.

4.7 Assignment of Administrators & Volunteers

Middle School/High School
Each state will be assigned an event(s) to administer during the NLC. The state will be responsible for recruiting the volunteers needed to run the event. The National Center will provide the final number of volunteers needed after the close of competitive event registration. Each state is then responsible for sharing the contact information for their event administrators, judge managers, and Welcoming Committee members with the National Center so that individuals may be included in the necessary training prior to the NLC. Training of other volunteers will be conducted by the State Leaders or event administrators.

Collegiate
All State Leaders and local advisers attending the NLC will be asked during registration to serve in one or more volunteer capacities.

4.8 Judge Eligibility & Assignments

Each judged event should have a minimum of two judges; three judges is ideal. Advisers may only be utilized as judges as a last resort. Advisers and members serving as judges may not be from the same state as competitors in the event they are judging.

Middle School
At least one judge must be a professional in the workforce. High school graduates or college students are also allowed to fill one of the three judge positions.

High School
At least one judge must be a professional in the workforce; ideally, two judges are business professionals. A college student is allowed to fill the final judge slot as necessary.

Collegiate

Because of the expertise required for judged events, all judges must be professionals in the workforce from the respective event categories.

Assignments
Judges are pre-assigned to a specialty area. When checking in, judges are directed to the area/tables of their assigned event to meet the judge manager. Judges will use an assigned code to access the specific rating sheets required for their event(s).

Training
A video of how to utilize the conference management system will be sent to judges, event administrators, and judge managers at least one week prior to the NLC. Judges will also receive a list of possible event assignments, along with a link to those events on fbla.org. A link to the training and a reminder will be sent 24-48 hours prior to the event.

4.9 Recognition at the NLC

The top 10 entries in each event will receive a recognition item. The top three entries in each event will receive a cash award, with the amount of the award to be determined each year based on funds donated.

4.10 Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

Mobile phones and smart devices (such as watches) are not allowed for use in objective tests or role-play competitions. Use of either will be considered a violation of the Honor Code unless required by a pre-approved accommodation.

4.11 Dress Code for Competitors

Implementation of the Dress Code shall take place during the competitive event check-in process by a trained individual. Competitors who are not dressed appropriately will receive a five-point Dress Code penalty. However, if the competitor is able to correct the Dress Code violation and report back by the originally assigned time, no penalty will be assessed.

4.12 Random Scheduling of Competitors in the Preliminary Round of Competition

All competitors who participate in a judged event that requires a preliminary round of competition will be randomly scheduled into a preliminary section using the competitive event management platform.

4.13 Use of Standard Deviation for Prejudging & Production Tests

Prejudged Events
For those events that have a prejudged component where the prejudged score is also part of the presentation score, each section of competitors will have their materials prejudged by a different set of judges. For those competitors who move forward into the final round of competition, their prejudged score will then be calculated using a normalization process to equalize the scores.

Production Test Events
Production test competitors will be randomly separated into groups of 15 competitors. Each group will be judged by a different set of judges. The scores of each competitor will then be calculated using a normalization process to equalize the scores.

4.14 Technology Guidelines

During the preliminary round of competition in all divisions, and during the final round of competition for all Middle School and Collegiate events (excluding case study competitions), competitors must present directly from a laptop/device if allowed by the Competitive Events Guidelines. Screens and projectors are not allowed, and power will not be provided. Competitors may present with and bring the following technology items into the performance as long as they fit on the small table in front of the judges' table or are held by the competitors: laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and external monitors that are approximately the size of a laptop monitor.

The following will be provided for the final round of technology presentation events for the High School division and for the case competitions in the Collegiate division: screen, power, table, and projector. It is up to final-round competitors to determine if they wish to use the provided technology. Participants using laptops or other devices that do not have an HDMI port will need to provide their own adapters. No Middle School and Collegiate events (with the exception of the case competitions) will be provided with technology resources.

Please refer to the Competitive Events Guidelines for a specific division (Middle School, High School, or Collegiate) to see which events will have access to the Internet during the NLC presentation. Internet access may not be wireless, so competitors should plan appropriately when selecting laptops/devices on which to present or provide their own adapters.

Please note that technology and Internet reliability at any conference venue may not be guaranteed. Competitors are advised to be prepared to improvise in the event a technology component or Internet connection is unavailable or stops functioning. Time will not be extended, and competitors will not be allowed to present again if there are technology/Internet issues.

4.15 Accommodations

FBLA meets the criteria specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act for all competitors with accommodations submitted through the conference registration system by the registration deadline.

FBLA will provide reasonable accommodations for competitors to enable equitable access to the Competitive Events Program.

The Accommodation Policy is in place to:

- Provide reasonable accommodations to competitors to enable equitable access to the program for all members.
- Recognize and facilitate the learning accommodation of competitors, including those with IEPs and accommodations required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The accommodation form must be submitted by the local chapter adviser or Collegiate member by the initial conference registration deadline through the conference registration system. The National Center does not guarantee accommodations can be met if submitted after this deadline.

4.16 Language

FBLA recognizes the need to enable competitors whose first language is not English to have equitable access to the Competitive Events Program. FBLA will provide reasonable accommodations, which may include translation services and interpreters, to those who submit an accommodation form. The form must be submitted by the local chapter adviser or Collegiate member by 11:59 p.m. ET on the initial conference registration deadline.

4.17 Review Process for Flagged Questions on Objective Tests

Competitors taking an objective test may flag questions for review within the online testing system. Once a test question is flagged, the individual administering online testing will provide the CEC with the question. The question will be reviewed by a member of the CEC, or their designee who is competent in the subject area, to recommend the best course of action. If it is determined that a test question should be removed, it will be removed immediately, and all scores recalculated.

4.18 Competitive Event Observation

Middle School
All rounds of events are closed to audience viewing.

High School
The preliminary round of judged events will be closed to audience viewing. The final round of the presentation category of events will be open to audience viewing as long as seating is available, excluding Future Business Leader and Job Interview. Competitors in the final round of an event are not allowed to view any of the other presentations in that event.

Collegiate
The preliminary and final rounds of events will be closed to audience viewing, except for case competitions and the Entrepreneurship Pitch Competition, as long as seating is available for final rounds. Competitors in the final round of the case study competitions are allowed to view other presentations in that event after they have presented.

Advisers of competitors are allowed to view events that permit audiences yet cannot interact with the competitor(s) during the event.

4.19 Email Addresses

The CEC recommends that members provide a non-school-based email address for communication between the National Center and the member. This recommendation is being made because numerous school districts use firewalls that block emails from outside domains.

- Email addresses should be of a professional nature, such as first initial, last name.
- Email accounts should be checked frequently so communications may occur in a timely manner.

For more information, review FBLA's **Privacy Policy**.

4.20 CCC Competitions

FBLA offers a Business Case Competition at the fall Career Connections Conferences for Collegiate members. Below is an overview of how these competitions differ from the NLC processes:

Career Connections Conference

- There are no limits to the number of entries per state.
- Late registered entries are not allowed.
- Refer to the specific event guidelines for details.

5.0 IMPROVEMENT & APPEALS PROCESS

The improvement and appeals process shall be housed within the [FBLA Help Desk](). This form will be the channel for competitive event suggestions, recommendations, and appeals.

Only a competitor, chapter adviser, or State Leader may submit an appeal. The State Leader will be notified if a competitor or chapter adviser submits an appeal. State Leaders and local chapter advisers will be notified if a competitor submits an appeal.

5.1 Review Process

All requests or submissions will be reviewed by the National Center staff upon receipt and categorized in the following areas:

Question/Procedural Clarity
Reply from the National Center staff within one week; timeline shared about if/when this matter will be reviewed by the CEC.

Suggestion or Recommendation
Acknowledged by the National Center staff within one week; timeline shared about if/when this matter will be reviewed by the CEC.

Appeal
If an appeal is received during the NLC, it will be acknowledged as soon as possible and the timeline for resolution and/or next steps provided. If referred to the CEC, it will be determined if the issue requires attention immediately or after the NLC concludes. Regardless, a reply will be provided on the same date if submitted during regular conference hours.

The CEC is committed to reviewing all Improvement and Appeals form submissions in a timely manner (at least quarterly for items that are not urgent).

5.2 CEC Decision Making

The quorum of the CEC members shall be half of the number of active committee members plus one member.

Decisions regarding competitive event procedural questions of the CEC are resolved by a majority vote.

During the NLC, decisions are resolved by a majority vote of CEC members present at the conference.

6.0 AMENDING POLICY & PROCEDURE

The Policy & Procedures Manual will be reviewed on an annual basis by the CEC and is subject to review by the Board of Directors.

The CEC may adjust policies to address extenuating circumstances as approved by the Board of Directors. Any such changes will be posted and communicated to all members, advisers, and State Leaders.

7.0 CLOSING

Please direct any questions or comments to the FBLA Director of Awards & Recognition:

Jen Staley
Director of Awards & Recognition
Future Business Leaders of America
12100 Sunset Hills Drive, Suite 200
Reston, VA 20190
703.657.8189
jstaley@fbla.org