



Employment Skills

Purpose

The Tennessee FFA Employment Skills Leadership Development Event is designed for FFA members to develop, practice and demonstrate skills needed for seeking employment in the industry of agriculture. Each part of the event simulates, as closely as possible, real-world activities that are used by real-world employers.

Event Rules

- The Tennessee FFA Employment Skills Leadership Development Event will be limited to two participants per region.
- FFA Official Dress is required for this event on the regional and state level.
- All written materials, including cover letter, resume, etc., will be the result of each participant's own efforts.
- **Contestants can be in possession of their Resume, Cover Letter, and padfolio throughout the duration of the event.**
- The follow-up letter **SHOULD ONLY** be completed during the follow-up correspondence portion of the event at State Convention.
- Any participant in possession of an unapproved electronic device in the event area is subject to disqualification.
- Job description, cover letter and resume must be uploaded to the designated location as communicated by Tennessee FFA State Staff. A penalty of 10% will be assessed for late documents.
- The event superintendent will check padfolios before competition to verify that the only printed materials the contestant contains are as follows: business cards, cover letter, and resume.

Evaluation

Participants will be randomly placed in interview order and all competitors will compete in one flight.

Event Format

The event is developed to help participants in their current job search (for their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs, internships, and part-time and full-time employment). Therefore, materials submitted by the participant must reflect their current skills and abilities and must be targeted to a job for which they would like to apply. In other words, participants cannot develop a fictitious resume; they must utilize their actual experience. They are expected to target the resume toward a real job for which they presently qualify.

Equipment

Participants are required to bring the following items to the event:

- Writing utensils.
- Resume.
- Cover letter.
- List of references.
- Business cards.
- Padfolio.
- Laptop (to complete job application and potentially follow-up letter)

The following items are not permitted:

- Letters of reference.
- Samples of work.
- Pictures.
- Personal pages.

Items to be electronically submitted before convention

Participants will electronically submit the following in PDF format:

- Job description.
- Cover letter.
- Resume.

A penalty of 10 percent will be assessed for documents received after the deadline.

Job description

- The job description is required in order for the judges to score sections of the event. The job description will not be scored but is a required submission.
- Participants who fail to submit this component will be subject to disqualification.
- The job description should include a description of the position the student is applying for, desired qualifications and work experience.
- Sources for job descriptions can be found by looking in the newspaper or online through job search websites and company websites.

Cover Letter (100 Points)

The cover letter is to be typed, one page, single spaced, left justified using Times, Times New Roman or Arial 10- to 12-point minimum font.

The letter is to be dated for the first day of the state event and addressed to:

Superintendent of the Employment Skills LDE
710 James Robertson Parkway
Andrew Johnson Tower, 9th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Resume (200 Points)

The resume should not exceed two pages total.

Resume must be non-fictitious and based upon actual work history.

The resume may be generated from the FFA Resume Generator © available at resumegenerator.FFA.org.

Items to be completed during convention

Electronic Employment Application (100 Points)

Participants will complete a standard electronic job application at State Convention. The application will be completed online and they will have 30 minutes to complete the application. Additional time may be given at the discretion of the event superintendent if technology issues arise. Additionally, if technology issues arise, a paper-based application will be substituted.

Initial Contact Interview (50 Points)

The initial contact will last four to five minutes and it will be conducted by a phone call. Students will sign up for an interview time when they complete their job application online.

The participant and the potential employer will speak to arrange an interview time. The potential employer may ask questions regarding aspects of the participant's resume.

Personal Interview (500 Points)

- The interview round will consist of a face-to-face interview with a panel of judges. Each interview will last a maximum of 15 minutes.

Follow-Up Correspondence (50 Points) (Not to be completed prior to event)

- Participants will submit follow-up correspondence after the interview. Participants will be provided with necessary information and/or items to compose a follow up correspondence.
- Correspondence may include but is not limited to, one of the following: email, hand-written note, or typed letter. Participants will have 30 minutes to complete the follow-up correspondence.

Tiebreakers

In the event of a tie, the participant with the highest personal interview score shall receive the higher rank.

If a tie still exists, the highest resume score will receive the higher rank. I

Scoring

Preliminary Round	Individual Points
Electronic employment application	100
Resume	200
Cover letter	100
Initial Contact Interview	50
Personal interview	500
Follow-up correspondence	50
TOTAL POINTS	1,000

Awards

The top two contestants from the competition will be recognized on stage at State FFA Convention.

References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available. Make sure to use discretion when selecting website references by only using reputable, proven sites. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation. The most current edition of resources will be used.

- Past CDE materials and other resources, FFA.org
- Open Colleges – How to Write a Resume, <http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/careers/resumes/how-to-write-a-resume>
- 8 Subtle Ways to Ace the Interview, <http://www.businessinsider.com/subtle-ways-to-ace-the-interview-2015-2>
- 9 Keys to Telephone Job Interview Success, http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/telephone-interviews.shtml
- Sending Your Thank You After the Job Interview, http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/job-interview-thank-you.shtml
- Accepting a Job Offer? Ask These 10 Questions First, <http://www.wetfeet.com/articles/accepting-a-job-offer-ask-these-10-questions-first>
- References from the career center at the land-grant university in your respective state.
- FFA Resume Generator, resumegenerator.FFA.org

Cover Letter Rubric

100 POINTS

Name _____ Member Number _____

Chapter _____ State _____

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Format and General Appearance	Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style are readable (10-12 pt); uses appropriate business format, date and address at top; addressed to appropriate person; appropriate signature block	Does not exceed one page without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style are readable (10-12 pt); uses appropriate business format, date and address at top; not addressed to appropriate person; inappropriate signature block	Exceeds one page; margins are inappropriate; font style is unreadable; font size is too small or too large; no signature; no date or address; no inside address; not in appropriate business format		X 4	
Introductory Paragraph	Identifies position they are applying for; states how they heard about the position; states why they are interested in the position; uses wording to attract reader's attention	Identifies position they are applying for; does not state how they found the job; vaguely describes why they are interested in the job; introduction is bland and not attention catching	Does not clearly identify position they are seeking; no description of how you heard about the position; does not grab the reader's attention		X4	
Skills and Experiences	Identifies two to three strongest qualifications for the job; indicates how education has prepared them for this job; states why you are interested in the position; skills and experiences are consistent with resume; makes reference to resume	Identifies one to two qualifications for the job; indicates how education has prepared them for this job; provides a vague explanation of why interested in the job; skills and experiences are somewhat consistent with resume; makes reference to resume	Does not identify relevant qualifications for the job; does not indicate how education has prepared them for this job; does not state why they are interested in the job; skills and experiences are not consistent with resume; does not mention resume		X4	
Closing Paragraph	Thanks reader for taking time to read; provides appropriate contact information; makes appropriate provisions for follow up	Thanks reader for taking time to read; provides contact information, but leaves reader to pursue a follow up	Does not thank reader; does not mention a plan for follow up; does not provide any contact information		X3	
Spelling/ Grammar/ Punctuation	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document		X5	

TOTAL POINTS

Resume Rubric

200 POINTS

Name	Member Number
Chapter	State

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Contact Information	Includes name, address, email address and phone number; name stands out on resume; provides professional e-mail address	Name does not stand out; email address is too casual	Missing name, address, email address or phone number; email used is inappropriate or unprofessional		X 2	
Employment Objective	Focused objective that states how employee will help company achieve its goals	Focused objective that states what employee wants from the company	No objective identified		X2	
Education or Relevant Coursework	Contains complete information (listed in reverse chronological order) with relevant courses listed; dates formatted correctly; GPA listed in correct format (if appropriate), includes appropriate honors and awards	Contains information (listed in reverse chronological order) with relevant courses listed; dates formatted correctly, may show gaps in work history; inappropriate GPA listed, includes appropriate honors and awards	Information not listed in reverse chronological order; important information missing; information not listed in correct format		X7	
Relevant Experience and Skills	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; company name, title, location and dates are included; strong action verbs used with correct verb tense; personal pronouns and extraneous words are omitted; bullets are concise, direct and indicate one's impact/accomplishments ; results are quantified; bullets are listed in order of importance	Entries are listed in reverse chronological order; entries have a pattern of one type of error; action verbs are weak; verb tenses are inconsistent; bullets are not concise or direct and do not indicate impact; bullets are written in complete sentences	Entries are not in reverse chronological order; most entries do not include company name, dates, location or position title; bullets are written in complete sentences; verb tenses are inconsistent; bullets are wordy, vague or do not indicate one's impact; bullets are not listed in order or importance to the reader; results are not quantified when appropriate; irrelevant or outdated information is listed		X9	

Achievements and Honors	Appropriate and relevant achievements and honors listed; achievements and honors related to career goal; provides specific details related to achievements and honors; listed in reverse chronological order	Appropriate and relevant achievements and honors listed; achievements and honors related to career goal; lacks specific details related to achievements and honors; listed in reverse chronological order	Achievements and honors not listed in reverse chronological order; inappropriate or irrelevant achievements listed; no achievement or honors are listed		X5	
References	Listed appropriate references and provided complete contact information for references	References are listed, but not all are appropriate or not all contact information for references is included	Inappropriate references are listed; no references listed; no contact information listed		X2	
Spelling/ Grammar/ Punctuation	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document		X5	
Format and General Appearance	Does not exceed two pages without overcrowding; margins are acceptable; font size and style are readable (10–12 point); headings reflect content and content substantiates headings; resume is targeted to job	Does not exceed two pages; appears overcrowded; margins are acceptable; font size and style are readable (10–12 point); headings don't necessarily reflect content and content substantiates headings; resume is targeted to job	Exceeds two pages; margins are inappropriate; font style is unreadable; font size is too small or too large		X8	
TOTAL POINTS						

Electronic Employment Application Rubric

100 POINTS

Name	Member Number
Chapter	State

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Consistent with Resume	Name, education, experience and other personal information matches information provided on resume	Name, education, experience and other personal information generally matches information provided on resume	Name, education, experience and other personal information do not match information provided on resume.		X4	
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document		X6	
Form Completed	Entire application was completed with "N/A" indicated where appropriate	Majority of the application was completed with few blank fields	Several blank spaces and missing information		X4	
Overall Impression	Application was consistent and appropriately highlighted candidates' qualifications for the position	Application was consistent and generally highlighted candidates' qualifications for the position	The application was not consistent and did not highlight candidates' qualifications for the position		X6	
TOTAL POINTS						

Initial Contact Interview Rubric

50 POINTS

Name		Member Number				
Chapter		State				
Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
First Impression	Introduced self when joining the call; dressed appropriately; spoke clearly and articulately with no hesitation; used appropriate tone, spoke at right pace to be clear, pronounced words clearly; exhibited confident tone, did not demonstrate nervousness	Incomplete introduction; dressed appropriately; spoke clearly and articulately, but with some hesitation; used appropriate tone, spoke at right pace, but showed some nervousness; pronunciation of words was usually clear, but sometimes vague	Did not introduce self upon joining call; dressed too casually for interview; did not use appropriate tone, frequently hesitated when speaking; pace was too fast; appeared nervous; pronunciation of words is difficult to understand or was unclear		X 3	
Confirmation	Confirmed date, time and location of preliminary face-to-face interview along with contact person/ information;	Did not confirm all needed information for preliminary face-to-face interview.	Caller had to offer interview and provide information for face-to-face interview.		X 1	
Response to Questions	Provided complete, accurate and concise answers; sold themselves without being pushy; used correct terminology; communicated knowledge of the related industry; used time efficiently	Provided some answers, some were incomplete, rambled occasionally; seemed off-putting at times in an attempt to sell themselves; some question as to correct terminology; seemed to have holes in knowledge of related industry	Unable to answer questions asked; off-putting presentation (tried too hard to sell themselves); used incorrect terminology for event; did not have a firm knowledge of the related industry		X 4	
Overall Impression	Sat at comfortable distance from camera and maintained optimal eye contact; background was free from distractions, used appropriate nonverbal communication cues (nods and smiles) to demonstrate level of engagement; exhibited poise (cool under pressure); was pleasant, professional and courteous; ended call appropriately and smoothly (thanked caller, said good-bye); did not have distracting mannerisms that affected their effectiveness	Sat at a comfortable distance from camera and maintained appropriate eye contact; background was appropriate with minimal distractions, seemed nervous under pressure, which impacted poise, pleasantness; used incorrect grammar, which distracted from interview; mannerisms and facial expressions distracted interview process (use of "ums" and "you know"); ended call somewhat appropriately (not sure what to do) or without thanking caller.	Sat too far or too close from camera; background was distracting, interview lacked engagement as evidenced by lack of eye contact with camera; appeared very nervous, not poised (cracks under pressure); ended call awkwardly and abruptly; did not thank caller or say good-bye, just hung up; mannerisms distracted from interview (excessive "ums" or "you know")		X 2	
TOTAL POINTS						

Personal Interview Rubric

500 POINTS

Name	Member Number
Chapter	State

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Appearance	Professional dress/groomed: Follows standard dress code, polished shoes, clothes pressed, conservative accessories	Dress appropriate: Just not as professional and “put together”, shoes clean, but not polished	Very disheveled: Dirty shoes, not wearing black shoes		x 10	
First Impression	Greeting: Appropriate salutation and firm handshake Introduction: States name Body language: Smiling and pleasant, does not sit until invited, confident in manner	Greeting: Confident but uneasy, soft handshake Introduction: States name only when asked Body language: Rarely smiles, cologne or perfume is distracting	Greeting: Does not use salutation, very informal Introduction: Fails to introduce self, fails to shake hands with interviewer Body language: Obnoxious cologne or perfume, chewing gum		x 15	
Response to Questions	Used appropriate language for career: Cited relevant examples; knowledge of career field evident (talk the talk); knows education and experience required for position; discussed skills gained through school or past jobs and how they are relevant to position applied; abilities described match the resume; responses concise and logically communicated; responses do not sound “canned”; provided in-depth description of skills, not just a list; provided in-depth response to questions, not yes/no responses to questions; established a “theme” that overall describes their abilities	Seemed to know terms associated with career: Some holes, cited several relevant examples; but list is incomplete, knew about career, but conveyed incomplete picture; unsure of education or experience required for position; incomplete list of skills gained through school and past jobs and relevance to position applied; abilities mostly match resume; responses seemed rehearsed and somewhat disorganized; provided some depth to description of job skills; provided some depth to responses to questions; provided some yes/no responses; was able to tie some abilities together to form a picture of qualifications.	Knew some of the language of position, but used incorrectly or did not show understanding of terms: Unable to cite or provided few relevant examples; position education and requirements not known or does not match applicants skill set; unable to relate skills learned in school or past jobs and relevance to position applied; abilities hardly match resume; responses seemed “canned” with little logical progression; mainly provided list of skills with little explanation; provided yes/no responses; unable to see an overall theme of persons' abilities		x 30	
Communication Skills	Persuasive: Led the interview in a direction that enabled them to expand so their skills were expressed, took initiative to add information beyond	Persuasive: Expanded somewhat on skills that are a fit for the position, volunteered some additional information to questions asked.	Persuasive: Answered yes or no to most questions; did not expand on skill set Confident: Did not appear comfortable, nervous, slouched in chair		x 30	

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
	<p>question asked.</p> <p>Confident: Exhibited self-confidence with body language and verbally</p> <p>Appropriate volume: Spoke with proper volume for room to hear clearly; not too loud, not too soft</p> <p>Enunciation/grammar: Avoided words like “git” versus “get” and “agin” versus “again”; used proper words when speaking (didn’t use 10-dollar words when a five-dollar word would do)</p> <p>Concise: Avoided run-on sentences and answered with logical and organized thoughts</p> <p>Sincere: Expressed true interest in the position they were seeking</p> <p>Poise: Avoids distracting mannerisms, such as drumming fingers or overuse of “um” and “you know”</p> <p>Discretion/Tact: Shared appropriate information and did not create an awkward situation through responses</p>	<p>Confident: Exhibited some nervousness, but covered well; voice and body language showed some uncertainty</p> <p>Appropriate volume: Did not modulate volume to express answers, could hear sometimes; but was quiet when unsure of response and hard to hear</p> <p>Enunciation/grammar: Some language not appropriate for position applied, used some slang and exhibited some “dialect”</p> <p>Concise: Some questions answered in a rambling fashion, but point made; thoughts were logical but somewhat disorganized</p> <p>Poise: Seemed comfortable with some nervousness, caught self before exhibiting distracting mannerisms, rarely used “um” or “you know”</p> <p>Discretion/tact: Most professional in tone and shared information that created little, if any, awkwardness</p>	<p>Appropriate volume: Hard to hear answers or volume too loud for room</p> <p>Enunciation/grammar: Used overly complex or simplistic language, sprinkled in words like “git” versus “get” and “agin” versus “again”</p> <p>Concise: Rambled and used run on sentences; answers were poorly organized and thoughts not clearly expressed</p> <p>Sincere: Seemed uninterested in the position and distracted</p> <p>Poise: Demonstrated distracted mannerisms such as tapping foot, drumming fingers, cracking knuckles, etc.; Excessive use of “um” and “you know”</p> <p>Discretion/tact: Shared information that may be seen as personal about someone else creating awkwardness, appeared unprofessional</p>			
Conclusion	<p>Posed appropriate questions of interviewer: e.g., when notification of selection will occur and how. Clarified next steps, inquired as to next step in interview process e.g., if there will be additional interviews, etc.</p> <p>Appropriate thanks and exit: Asked for business card, thanked interviewer, stood and shook hands prior to exiting room</p>	<p>Questions posed were somewhat appropriate: Some had no relevance to interview; incomplete inquiry of the next steps in the interview process; asked for business card, thanked interviewer and shook hand, but seemed uncertain how to end the interview and exit</p>	<p>Asks no questions: Questions asked (if asked) have no relevance to next steps in the interview process; ended interview abruptly or awkwardly; exited without thanks or shaking hands</p>		x 15	
TOTAL POINTS						

Follow-Up Correspondence Rubric

50 POINTS

Name _____ Member Number _____

Chapter _____ State _____

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Format	The document was directed to the appropriate person with an appropriate address and salutation. The level of formality was appropriate for the type of correspondence.	The document was directed to the appropriate person with an appropriate address and salutation with minor errors. The level of formality was generally appropriate for the type of correspondence.	The document was not directed to the appropriate person. No address or salutation was included. The level of formality was not appropriate.		X 2	
Content	Effectively expressed appreciation and appropriately reiterated their qualities; expressed interest and appropriately stated provisions for follow-up.	Attempted to express appreciation and generally reiterated their qualities; generally expressed interest and attempted to state provisions for follow-up.	Did not attempt to express appreciation; did not attempt to reiterate their qualities; did not attempt to express interest or state provisions for follow-up.		X3	
Grammar/ Punctuation/ Spelling	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are extremely high quality with two or less errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are adequate with three to five errors in the document.	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are less than adequate with six or more errors in the document.		X2	
Overall Impression	Writing (when appropriate) was legible and length was appropriate.	Writing (when appropriate) was difficult to read and length was generally appropriate.	Writing (when appropriate) was illegible; length was inappropriate.		X3	
TOTAL POINTS						